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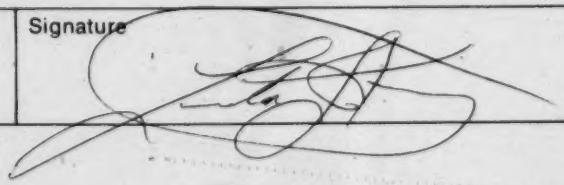

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Marriage Preparation: An Evaluation of Engaged Encounter

by

Linda J. Keep

A THESIS

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Dedication

To the unmarried:

May they read and benefit

ABSTRACT

This study examined two aspects of marriage preparation courses: the relevance of the content of these programs to premarital issues, and the effects of a specific premarital course on engaged couples.

The program selected for study was Engaged Encounter. The sample was composed of 72 individuals. Thirty individuals were assigned to the first treatment group, 24 to the second and 18 served as controls. A questionnaire in two forms constructed for this research was used. The data was analyzed using mainly the Pillais multivariate analysis of variance, although a univariate analysis of variance and crosstabs were also used.

The research indicated that the Engaged Encounter program content closely resembled that specified in the literature as pertinent to premarital issues, and that, following the Engaged Encounter experience, couples significantly increased their degree of discussion, agreement and satisfaction in fourteen specified areas.

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I. INTRODUCTION

> When men and women embark on a career in their twenties or early thirties that they intend to pursue across a lifetime, they rarely assume that the next forty or fifty years will be one smooth flight from triumph to triumph. If they have any maturity at all, they know there will be high points, unexpected detours, unforeseeable problems and challenges, occasional crises, and days when they will wake up in the morning wondering why they chose this particular career and whether they are really suited for it.
>
> But when men and women embark on that journey called marriage...They tend to do so with far less realistic appreciation of the challenges and vicissitudes that await them.
> (Brandon, 1981, p. 208-9)

Men and women think nothing of spending years in preparation for a profession, yet are reluctant, even insulted, at the thought of taking a few days to prepare for marriage (Rosenfield, 1981; Theis, 1974). This is strange, for nowhere does one commit oneself as completely as in marriage. A marriage can become either a source of great joy, or deep misery depending upon the success of the relationship within that marriage. Yet, in a society which bases mate selection on romantic love, individuals are too often guided into matrimony without a serious evaluation of their potential for marital success (Ramu, 1979). Consequently, expectations are often unrealistic and seldom met. The result has been an overwhelming rise in marital distress, which is evidenced by the rise in divorce rates.

Divorce statistics are considered by this author to be indicative of past marital distress. Although many existing marriages are in a state of distress and many others are in

the process of separating, neither can be statistically accounted for. The divorce rate, therefore, is a minimal indicator of the existence of distress in marriage. It is recognized, however, that those particular marriages which have divorced may no longer be numbered among the maritally distressed. Staying together is not indicative of satisfaction, nor is divorce the sole indicator of past marital distress. Divorce rates are, however, concrete figures which help in estimating the possible minimal existance of distress in marriage during a given year in a given locale. They are, therefore, essential for determining whether marital distress, as a problem, exists.

According to the 1982 Statistics Canada census, Canada's divorce rate per 1,000 marriages was 373.9. When compared with figures of twenty-five selected countries Canada's divorce rate was surpassed only by those of Denmark, Sweden, and the United States (Statistics Canada, 1983). Canada, therefore, had the fourth highest divorce rate of twenty-six countries. The total number of divorces in Canada during 1982 was 70,436 while the total number of marriages during this same year was 188,360. This is almost one divorce for every 3 marriages.

In 1982 the Canadian divorce rate per 100,000 population was 285.9, while the more accurate rate per 100,000 married women over 15 years of age was 1,164.4. The comparative divorce rates for Alberta this same year were, respectively, 383.3 per 100,000 population and 1,592.0 per

100,000 married women over 15 years of age. Alberta's divorce figures have increased an average of 4.08 percent over the past five years, while the rates for Canada have increased an average of 3.22 percent per year. Alberta's divorce rate, therefore, well-exceeds that of the national average and is the highest in the nation.

Canada's divorce rates were among the lowest in the western industrial societies until the divorce laws were changed in 1968 (Makabe, 1980). The less stringent laws allowed a marked increase from 55 divorces per 100,000 population in 1968 to 124 per 100,000 population in 1969. This trend has been upward ever since. This does not necessarily indicate an increase in marital distress itself, but rather an increase only in this manifested form of marital distress in our society.

Certain theorists have attempted to explain the increase in divorce rates (manifested marital distress) in terms of sociological explanations. These sociological explanations have also been used to ease the guilt associated with divorce, and the sense of failure many people experience as a result of resolving marital distress in this manner (Goetting, 1979). Goetting (1979) believed a global change in western society has, in part, been responsible for the higher rate of marital dissolution. This, she stated, was comprised of five interrelated components:

1. the doctrine of individualism,

2. the trend toward equality of the sexes,
3. the trend toward a general acceptance of divorce,
4. growing systemness, and
5. affluence.

Based upon her findings, the following descriptions of these five components are as follows:

The doctrine of individualism suggests that the needs of the individual supersede those of the group, and that its satisfaction should be pursued at the expense of those of the group.

The trend toward equality of the sexes is viewed as an extension of individualism, at least for women. It is comprised of a growing economic independence of women which has led to an increase in equality. Women of today are far less willing to continue performing "displeasing domesticity," and instead look for equality in relationships.

The trend toward a general acceptance of divorce pertains to society's attitude changes toward divorce. Divorce has become a common occurrence. It is no longer shocking, scandalous, or news. There is greater tolerance and acceptability of the church toward divorce and divorce law reforms now tend toward leniency. Standards of marital satisfaction are high and if not met, divorce is now seen as an acceptable alternative.

Growing systemness is "the process by which a society develops a more complex social structure containing greater

structural differentiation and functional specialization" (Goetting, 1979, p. 80). Industrialization, which is characteristic of Canadian society, is associated with growing systemness. The modern family has been stripped of traditional functions and these, in turn, have been taken over by societal institutions (ie. economics by the work world; education by the schools; recreation by clubs and movie houses; and protection by the provincial authorities). According to Goetting (1979) many of these needs are now being met outside the family and this, therefore, leads to a greater proneness to marital dissolution, the manifestation of past marital distress.

Affluence is viewed as the fifth contributor to divorce. Families within society are now seen by Goetting as being able to afford divorce, and societal support is more frequently available. Medical technology and leisure, which have been "conducive to a longer life expectancy," are also seen as tending to lead to a greater risk of divorce due to the longer span of years couples are now required to remain married.

These five components make up the societal level changes which are "at least partially responsible for the rising divorce rate," states Goetting (1979, p. 84). A Canadian study examining the differentials in divorce rates across ten provinces (Makabe, 1980) reiterated Goetting's findings (these will not be repeated here), and in addition indicated that provinces with a higher degree of population

turnover (ie. greater transiency) experienced a lower degree of social integration, attached less social cost to divorce and, therefore, experienced higher divorce rates. The Makaby study, therefore, found greater divorce rates in areas of high urbanization and industrialization, and in areas with more economic opportunities for women.

Klemer (1965), who also discussed sociological explanations of manifested marital distress, stated that what has happened to marriage can be best understood in terms of three major social changes: (1) the decline in understanding between marriage partners, (2) the loss of determination to stay married, and (3) the development of unrealistic marriage expectations. Whatever the reasons, sociological, personal or both, divorce rates have risen and are continuing to rise.

Many theorists believe that preventive alternatives could provide a decrease in marital distress (Glendening & Wilson, 1972; Mion, 1974; Shonick, 1975; Matheson, 1977). Many studies indicate a direct link between marriage preparation and a reduction in divorce rates and, therefore, between marriage preparation and a reduction in marital distress (Mion, 1974; Matheson, 1977; Whipple & Whittle, 1976; Mace, 1972). Hence, premarital counseling as a preventive tool against marital distress has long been recognized as a vital link in diminishing the rising divorce rate while allowing couples to examine their total readiness for marriage (Foster, 1935; Mudd, 1940; Duvall, 1965; Mace,

1972; Glendening & Wilson, 1972; Mion, 1974; Shonick, 1975; Whipple & Whittle, 1976; Rolfe, 1977; Matheson, 1977; Schumm & Denton, 1979; Bader et al., 1980).

Matheson (1977) believed the frequency of divorce could be reduced and marriages strengthened if evaluations and expectations could be mutually agreed upon prior to marriage. Glendening and Wilson (1972) proposed that the difficulties leading to marital breakdown could best be dealt with before marriage. Shonick (1975) found that premarital counseling was valuable in offering both primary and secondary prevention; that is, providing counseling about the realities of marriage, and providing the identification of couples requiring further treatment.

Many theorists, therefore, believe the time for serious reflection and evaluation of a couple's potential as marriage partners is before the wedding day, not afterward (Rosenfield, 1981; Klemer, 1965; Mace, 1972; Rutledge, 1966). Through exploration, couples may learn how they compare, where their strengths and weaknesses lie, and can learn ahead of time which areas need work, and which, if any, are irreconcilable. It would be advantageous to discover potential areas of conflict and work them through before hand in order to avoid later marital difficulties. The resolution and recognition of differences leading to difficulties does not happen automatically, but through relationship exploration and compromise, such as that initiated by premarriage courses, and is a sound step toward

the success of a marriage. A couple's willingness to do everything in their power to ensure a happy and successful future together is a sign of realism and maturity, and this includes adequate marriage preparation.

Although many authors emphasize the importance of premarital programs as a preventive measure against marital distress, other theorists believe far more research in this area needs to be conducted (Schumm & Denton, 1979; Gurman & Kniskern, 1977). Marriage preparation, by the majority of individuals, is recognized by many theorists as generally insufficient (Rutledge, 1966; Guldner, 1971; Knox & Patrick, 1971; Gleason & Prescott, 1977).

A. Summary

Divorce statistics, as an indicator of marital distress, are rising and premarital programs are being emphasized by many theorists as a preventive measure against marital distress. Certain theorists believe (and I agree) that more research in this area is needed in order to evaluate and improve premarital programs. If such emphasis is to be placed upon premarital programs, an evaluation of program effectiveness must necessarily be determined.

It would be humanly impossible to evaluate all programs offered in a given area within a single study, and it would require an extensively large and longitudinal study in order to directly measure the effects of one particular program on the incidence of marital distress in a given population.

This would also be a difficult venture because the incidence of marital distress itself cannot be adequately measured. In order to establish the effects of a preventive approach to marital distress on a smaller and more manageable scale, the present study will, therefore, focus on evaluating the effects of one selected premarital program on a selected group of premarital couples. It is to this end that we now turn.

B. Statement of the Problem

Marital distress is increasing, as evidenced by the rise in divorce statistics. A preventive approach to marital distress has merit, as evidenced by the number of theorists who have done research in this area. It is a point of fact that the frequency and prevalence of marital distress itself cannot be directly measured, only roughly estimated through divorce statistics. Marital distress is, however, real and prevalent in Canadian society. In order to conduct this study and evaluate a preventive approach to marital distress, I have decided to evaluate the effects of a specific premarital program on a specific group of premarital couples. If it can be shown that the program meets various criteria and through these criteria initiates a more thorough exploration of relationship issues by partners, causing possible unrealistic expectations and myths to be dispelled, then perhaps couples will enter into marriage with more realistic expectations, greater

self-awareness, awareness of their partners and of marriage itself, than they may have had prior to participation in the program. Marital distress originating from misperceptions, disillusionment, unrealistic expectations, and a lack of a thorough discussion of relationship issues might, therefore, be prevented.

During the course of this study the following guidelines will aid in the evaluation of a selected premarital program:

1. A thorough review of the literature will be conducted investigating all areas which are relevant to premarital issues, and which should, therefore, be included in a premarital program.
2. A thorough description of the premarital course selected will be provided in order to provide contrast with the criteria prescribed in the literature.
3. In the analysis, a contrast between the criteria deemed important in the literature and that provided by the premarital program under evaluation will be presented.
4. In the analysis, the effects of the selected premarital program in these specified content areas will be sought (the method for conducting this analysis will be outlined later in the thesis).

C. Project Format

In this chapter I have presented an introduction to the study and provided information relevant to the needs and significance of the project. Several guidelines have been outlined which will be followed during the course of the study.

Chapter II reviews the literature relevant to the area of investigation, and documents what other investigators have found. A summary of this review will be presented, a conceptual model outlined and various research questions stated.

Chapter III presents several alternatives to approach this study and outlines the method selected to conduct the research. This chapter also presents a brief overview of the premarriage courses available for study and addresses the basis on which a selection was made.

Chapter IV provides an in-depth description of the premarital program selected for study.

Chapter V reports the research findings and provides an analysis of them.

Chapter VI presents a discussion and implications based upon these findings.

II. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

A. Organization of this Section

In order to effectively evaluate the review of relevant literature all available avenues which relate to premarital issues will be documented. The following issues will, therefore, be presented:

1. The purpose of the engagement phase and the intent of premarital couples.
2. The issue of idealization with premarital couples.
3. The dating-mating selection as it pertains to marriages today.
4. Cohabitation as a premarital issue.
5. General premarital program formats which are documented as the most preferred in the literature.
6. Positive and negative evaluations of the effectiveness of various premarital programs.
7. Compulsory marriage preparation.
8. Issues relevant to the quality of marital relationships and which, therefore, qualify as areas pertinent to premarital evaluation. These issues will then be categorized into key content areas and the key content areas will then be discussed in greater detail.
9. A summary of the literature review will then be presented.
10. This author's conceptual model of the literature review will be documented.

11. Research Questions following from the preceding review will then be stated.

B. Engagement Defined

Hicks (1970) reviewed the major textbook assumptions about engagement, then empirically tested the engagement assumptions of ninety-four couples. Theoretical research and empirical findings paralleled one another. These findings concluded that in fact there are different kinds of engagement. Certain couples viewed engagement as a period in which to test marriage possibilities, whereas others viewed engagement as a commitment to marriage. In general these two types of engagement were "delineated on the basis of degree of commitment" (Hicks, 1970, p. 62), with the latter view of engagement being the most committed to marriage. Another consideration brought forth by the study was that personality exploration may have preceeded the engagement period rather than follow its onset. Consequently, the perceived purpose of the engagement period, as a time of evaluation or commitment, may vary from individual to individual, and couple to couple. A couple's intentions and perceptions during engagement may consequently have important implications for the future of that relationship. The purpose of the engagement phase, therefore, based upon Hicks (1970), remains undetermined since the definition itself differs. Because the question of commitment varies within this phase, a clearer and more universal definition

of the purpose of the engagement period needs to be established.

The Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary (1977) defines engagement in terms of such words as "attract," "committed" (without specifying the degree). and "to bind by a pledge or contract." It also includes the terms "affianced" and "state of betrothal." These latter two terms more explicitly define the agreement, or promise, of marriage, hence leaving no doubt as to the degree and manner of commitment involved. "Engagement," therefore, as determined by the literature, is a nonspecific term regarding the intended commitment of two people. The terms "premarital" and "premarriage" are not listed in the dictionary, but by separate definition of the prefix and main word body, a specific commitment to marriage is clearly implied.

C. Idealization

> You should also be warned that all of us have a propensity to see what we're looking for, in the sense that we project the qualities we want or need onto the other person (Cappon, 1981, p. 48).

Ball and Henning (1981) claim idealizing individuals tend to ignore each other's flaws and deny any likelihood of future problems. Engaged individuals who are filled with fantasies about love and marriage tend to generalize their idealizations to their intended spouses and then, after marriage, discover the truth and become disillusioned (Schulman, 1974). Idealistic couples usually experience more

conflict in their relationships and generate more distortions in their perceptions of each other's views, especially within areas of disagreement (Schulman, 1974). A block in communication was found by Schulman to occur in areas where disagreements and distortions were high and misperceived assumptions of similarity in these areas of high disagreement occurred.

> [P]otential conflict can block communication so that it cannot be recognized and resolved. ...where conflict is not perceived the romantic ideal becomes the predetermined response (Schulman, 1974, p. 146).

Although idealistic couples were found to score equal to or higher than realistic couples on a standard test of engagement adjustment, scores on these "transparent" (obvious) questionnaires were believed to generate socially desirable, as opposed to honest, responses (Schulman, 1974). Schulman (1974) concluded that scores on standard engagement adjustment tests may not only be misleading but may even encourage idealistic couples to marry without warning of potential conflict in their relationship. From her viewpoint, it would be most profitable to view all engaged couples as having some romanticism, but with varying degrees of intensity.

Tamashiro (1978) claimed that couples entered into marriage in what he conceptualized as a "magical" stage. Likewise, many other theorists claimed that unrealistic expectations about marriage were frequently held by engaged couples (Bagarozzi & Rauen, 1981; Cossitt, 1981; Ball &

Henning, 1981; Fengler, 1973; Schulman, 1974; Olson, 1972). No one person can realistically satisfy all of another's needs (Klemer, 1965). That they can is a romantic ideal.

Fengler (1973) noted that three independent dimensions of the idealization factor emerged. Rather than being an all-encompassing term, he found ideological dimensions pertaining to:

1. Economic security,
2. Parental responsibility, and
3. Expressive companionship (intimacy and emotional satisfaction).

The tendency of engaged couples to idealize in these three areas depended on variations in age and socioeconomic status. If both individuals' socioeconomic upbringing and levels of education were low, Fengler found that the economic factor would be the one most idealized. Regardless of education level, individuals raised in relative affluence were found to hold idealization tendencies toward the expressive companionship factor. Most young people, however, Fengler concluded, seemed to hold relatively conservative attitudes toward parental responsibility. That is, according to Fengler (1973), regardless of education level the young (20 to 29 years of age) in his study held fewer idealizations on this factor. Those who did score high on this dimension presently had children, frequently attended church, were child-centered, and had relationships whereby they were forced to turn to their children to compensate for

the lack of love received from their spouse. These individuals were more likely to idealize within the parental relationship.

Knox (1970) supported the concept of love as changing over time. As validated by ten professionals in the field of marriage and the family, "Love was viewed as ranging on a continuum from extreme romanticism (there is only one love; true love is eternal) to extreme realism, the latter referred to as conjugal love" (Knox, 1970, p. 152). He found that higher levels of education were positively correlated with a conjugal, or realistic, conception of love. According to Knox, romanticism reached its peak in adolescent years, was replaced by realism after several years of marriage, and romanticism returned after the couple had been married over 20 years. Possible explanations offered for this latter occurrence were: marriage stability, cognitive dissonance, selective remembering, and general levels of satisfaction. In conclusion, Knox encouraged the anticipation of rewarding years which would follow the more difficult ones, yet acknowledged the fact that this transition was not automatic. The initial transition "from moonlight and roses to daylight and dishes" could be reversed with appropriate behavior and feelings on the part of the couple.

Olson (1972) discussed several myths about marriage which lead many uninformed couples to anticipate: that a poor marriage will improve spontaneously over time; that a poor relationship will improve with marriage; that one can

change one's partner after marriage; or that, with the addition of a child, things will improve. Increased time and commitment of this sort without the foundation of a good relationship does not bring about an improvement in the relationship, instead, new problems are created (Olson, 1972).

In summation, idealization in premarital couples exists and premarital individuals should be made aware of, and cautioned against, its consequences. Idealizations can lead to later disillusionment and distress in marriage.

D. The Dating–Mating Selection Process

Olson (1972) stated that the dating system which has evolved in this country has been successful in drawing the vast majority into marriage at least once. He further claimed its universality was one of its limitations for it pushed many into marriage at too early an age, which then promoted unstable marriages. Theorists agree that certain parental and marital instabilities occur as a result of mate-selection outcomes (Mueller & Pope, 1977; Olson, 1972). "Only recently have more youth become aware of the time inadequacies of the current dating system" (Olson, 1972, p. 384). However, even with this awareness, marriage in the 1980s continues to be between partners of very young ages (ie. under 20 years of age) (Statistics Canada, 1983).

In Canada during 1982, 36 percent of all divorces involved marriages where at least one partner was under 20

years of age (Statistics Canada, 1983). Another 27 percent of all divorces were accounted for by couples who were married while both males and females were between 20 and 24 years of age. Sixty-three percent of all divorces in Canada during 1982 were accounted for by marriages where both partners were under 25 years of age. The divorce rate steadily increases with the decrease in age at time of marriage (Statistics Canada, 1983). Hence, teenage marriages suffer the greatest mortality rate among all marriages today (Statistics Canada, 1983; Shonick, 1975; Elkin, 1977).

Many factors other than age, however, play a role in establishing the success or failure of a marital relationship. Matrimony between partners where one or both are young and/or of limited education are considered to be especially high-risk (Mueller & Pope, 1977; Landis & Landis, 1973; Shonick, 1975). Other factors include the romantic love ideal operating in mate-selection, emotional immaturity, and the lack of readiness for marriage. These again, however, are more prevalent among the very young.

Olson (1972) considered premarital programs to be already too late in the dating game to be of any impact. Intervention, instead of occurring at the end of the dating process, he claimed, should be introduced much earlier (ie. within the school system).

In summation, according to these theorists, the dating-mating selection in itself can engender marital distress by encouraging the frequent and early occurrence of

matrimony before maturity and readiness are established.

E. Cohabitation

Mion (1974) stated that the prevention of divorce was possible through:

1. varied forms of cohabitation,
2. providing reliable home and school based sex education, and
3. establishing effective premarriage counseling programs.

It is not clear whether Mion is stating whether one of these criterion will prevent divorce, or if prevention would require the combination of all three criteria. The questions at this point, therefore, are: (1) If cohabitation is a sufficient preventive measure by itself, should cohabitating individuals be excused from having to take a premarriage course? (2) If found to be a good preventive measure, should cohabitation be required of all couples before marriage in lieu of a premarriage program? (Both of these questions hinge on whether or not cohabitation is in fact found to be a preventive measure against marital distress.) (3) Do cohabitating individuals view this life style as a step toward establishing a marital commitment, or do they view it as an alternative to the traditional form of marriage?

In terms of establishing a marital commitment, women who cohabitated were found to desire the security of marriage, whereas the men viewed the arrangement as a permanent alternative to marriage (Lyness, Lipetz & Davis,

1972). Marriage rates for cohabitating couples, therefore, depended "upon which of the partner's positions prevailed" (Lyness, Lipetz & Davis, 1972). The transition into marriage for cohabitating couples was, therefore, seen as a difficult one.

Still, many individuals were reported to seek this life style as a prevention against marital distress. Ramu (1979) found Canadian students to be more inclined to consider marriage alternatives than the standard marriage form. An awareness of problems in marriage, especially with marital roles, was reflected by the students' overall negative comments toward marriage and toward the legal implications resulting from unsuccessful marriages. Through the alternative of cohabitation, these students were seeking insurance against these unpleasant marital outcomes.

In answer to whether or not cohabitation is being correctly viewed as a preventive measure against marital distress, very few studies examining marital differences based upon previous cohabitation or noncohabitation were found. Of all studies which were reviewed, however, each reported that no reliable differences in marital satisfaction or divorce rates were found to exist between couples who either had or had not cohabitated premaritally (Newcomb & Bentler, 1980; Jacques & Chason, 1979). In addition, it was found that couples who had lived together "did not reciprocate the kinds of feelings (of need, respect, happiness, involvement, or commitment to marriage)

that one would expect to be the basis of a good heterosexual relationship" (Lyness, Lipetz & Davis, 1972, p. 310).

To summarize, since cohabitation does not appear to alter marriages in either a positive or negative direction, cohabitation itself as a preventive measure against marital distress cannot be supported.

F. Recommended Premarital Program Formats

Most premarriage program formats consist of lectures followed by small group or couple only interchange, or large group with group facilitators (Rolfe, 1977; Gleason & Prescott, 1977). Rolfe (1977) found smaller groups to be more beneficial, and that a more relaxed atmosphere with better participation was evident when no one religious group was over-represented. Rolfe also advised the avoidance of an authoritarian or superior overtone to the program.

Mace (1972) documented three major approaches to marriage preparation: (1) the "Facts of Life Approach" designed to impart information and "expert" instruction; (2) the counseling of couples experiencing relationship difficulty approach; and finally, (3) an encouragement of evaluation and exploration of the self, partner, and the relationship. Most premarital individuals preferred to see themselves as taking part in the last group, believing they had few, if any, areas of difficulty (Mace, 1972; Gleason & Prescott, 1977; Glendening & Wilson, 1972).

Most premarriage programs are offered by the various churches or their affiliated social service groups (Schumm & Denton, 1980; Bader et al., 1980; Rolfe, 1977), and most appear to center around the group method, which involves the attendance of many premarital couples at a single premarital program at any one time. It, therefore, seems necessary to document both the benefits and limitations of this method, since it appears to be the method most widely used. Gleason and Prescott (1977) have completed such a documentation. They have listed the benefits of the group method of premarital counseling as involving:

1. Time economy (increasing the number of people seen within the time span available).
2. Reducing the couple's need for denial.
3. A healthy competition which surfaces in trying to be the first to resolve conflicts.
4. The romantic view of marriage seems to be dispelled sooner.
5. Speed of learning skills such as empathy and description of feelings is increased.
6. A favorable alternative to individual counseling, which is viewed as "negative, a plea for help, a confession of weakness, as acknowledgment of a relationship deficiency, or a sign of a pathology" (Gleason & Prescott, 1977, p. 278).
7. Allows each individual the opportunity to progress and participate "at his own pace."

8. Permits participation increase or decrease with greater ease.
9. Is sometimes viewed as a "refined rap session" and therefore an "in" thing to do.
10. Allows participation without undue exposure.
11. The group method is "well suited to instructional counseling" when required.
12. Groups provide "an opportunity to experiment with new behaviors and alternative methods of handling difficult problems" (p. 278).
13. Allows observation of other couples resulting in "less distortion and more realistic expectations."
14. Increased awareness of verbal and nonverbal behaviors in one another is initiated by the group process.

Limitations of the group method were documented as follows:

1. Difficulty arises in the event that one couple "dominates the time with their needs or interests, especially when their needs are much more intense than [those of] other group members" (p. 279). Individual counseling should be suggested in this case.
2. "[W]hen discussion of one topic generates interest in a different but related topic," but through completion of the first topic, is lost.
3. When one couple in the group identifies too intensely with another couple and focuses on the many problems which may potentially arise instead of seeking solutions or ways to prevent this course of events.

4. Finally, a group setting sometimes restricts the self-disclosure of certain individuals.

In their summation, Gleason and Prescott acknowledged certain problems which were inevitable in the group method, however, they stated that the benefits attained by this method "far overpower" its difficulties. They further commented on two variations of the group method: content and process orientations. The former focused on information given by "experts," whereas the latter focused more on relationship exploration and enhancement. Both were documented by Gleason and Prescott as being important in premarital preparation.

Miller, Nunnally, and Wackman (1976) claimed that many premarital programs sought to prepare couples for marriage by confronting them with potential problems which may arise in a marriage. This approach, they stated, was premature as many of these problems might never be encountered by some couples. Instead they favored programs which attempted to teach specific skills which were immediately beneficial to the couple and could also be used after their transition into marriage.

In summation, the small group method of premarital counseling appears to be the most favored and its benefits appear to greatly outweigh its limitations. It is conducive to discussion as well as to information giving. No one religious group should be over-represented and the avoidance of an authoritarian overtone are recommended. Finally,

instead of focusing on potential problems which may arise in a marriage, it is recommended instead that specific skills be taught which may aid a couple in their transition into marriage.

G. Documented Effectiveness of Premarital Programs

Marriage preparation courses do not offer 100 percent guarantees just as driver training courses do not completely prevent highway accidents (Duvall, 1965). This is a statement which still is true today. Although certain theorists report favorable premarital program effects, they also report several criticisms. According to Duvall (1965), marriage education objectives are usually stated in terms of knowledge, attitudes, competence, and values. In terms of their evaluation, she concludes, "Marriage courses have been proven to be remarkably effective in all measures used to evaluate them to date" (Duvall, 1965, p. 184). However, most evaluations of premarriage programs have relied upon the self-reports of couples immediately completing the program. Such evaluations are obtained at a time when favorable comments are optimal (Schumm & Denton, 1979; Glendening & Wilson, 1972; Van Zoost, 1973), and long-range effects are frequently not obtained. Alternate treatment groups participating in the same program have seldom been compared (Schumm & Denton, 1979), and the documented results of these studies have frequently obtained mixed results. In addition, long- or short-range "natural" samples of couple behavior

are frequently unobtainable; that is, evaluation methods must usually rely upon the honesty, cooperation, and good will of couples involved, therefore, often evaluations obtained are by artificial means (testing). Testing at the couples' homes, though, has helped alleviate this problem to a certain extent since intrusion is minimized.

Gurman and Kniskern (1977) conducted a comprehensive evaluation of 29 marital and premarital programs in order to determine their effectiveness. Their outcome criteria fell into three general categories:

1. Overall satisfaction and adjustment,
2. Relationship skills (communication and conflict resolution), and
3. Individual personality variables (ie. esteem, introversion–extroversion, stability–instability).

Overall, based on controlled studies, the results of these 29 programs were positive. Program effects surpassed the results of control groups by 67 percent. The remaining 33 percent, however, showed no difference. Thus, although the overall results were positive, there still remains considerable room for improvement. The authors' recommendations, therefore, specified the need for further objective evaluations and follow–up studies.

In measuring program effects according to their influence on changing marriage plans, Meadows and Taplin (1970) noted that among those couples participating in premarital programs, couples who dissolved their engagements

as a direct result of participation in the program rated the sessions as beneficial, and tended to view their broken engagements in a positive light. The effects of these programs, therefore, as determined by these means in the Meadows and Taplin (1970) study, were positive.

Bagarozzi and Rauen (1981) reviewed thirteen well standardized programs and, in general, found these programs to be "atheoretical in their approach to intervention, loosely designed and non-specific as to their goals" (Bagarozzi & Rauen, 1981, p. 13). Few programs had couples reevaluate their decision to marry, and no data was obtained which reported a decrease in the incidence of divorce as a direct result of a program itself. Bagarozzi and Rauen suggested the great need for program effectiveness evaluations and implicitly emphasized that long-range effects be looked at.

The literature review conducted by Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett and Conway (1980) reported their favorable attitudes toward the goals of most premarital programs; however, it also listed several criticisms pertaining to:

1. the failure of gearing programs to the needs of those couples involved,
2. inadequate preparation for the realities of marriage,
3. lack of coordination and organization, and
4. the lack of well researched designs into the effectiveness of marriage preparation programs.

The failure of premarriage programs to examine the needs of couples as perceived by themselves was also a concern of Schumm and Denton (1979). They saw the perceived needs of couples as a factor which would allow a wiser selection of a more suitable program to fit their needs.

Other theorists believed that post-marital, as opposed to premarital, counseling had more effect on couples because, they claimed, couples were then more amenable to change. Guldner (1971) stated that couples married at least six months were more open to suggestions and discussion revolving around the following identified problem areas: establishing role priorities; manner of expressing feelings, especially hurt and anger; sexual adjustment; thinking about children and when to get pregnant; dependence-independence and dominance-submission; decision making to mutual satisfaction; conflicts from outside influences such as in-laws, work, and former friends; and finally, the naive expectancy to effect a change in one's mate held prior to marriage. These issues could, and should, be addressed before marriage, yet notably depend upon the receptivity of couples at this time. According to Rosenfield (1981):

> [O]ne can learn as much about a possible partner before marriage as ten years later. The unpleasant fact is that people concerned frequently do not wish to do so (Rosenfield, 1981, p. 1014).

Duvall (1965) claimed that the effectiveness of a premarriage course would depend upon such factors as:

1. The readiness of the student for this particular

educational experience.

2. The gearing of the course to student need, interest, and involvement.
3. Teacher competency, both personally and professionally.
4. Suitability of text, materials, and methods to course objective and student orientation.
5. Official support and provision for the marriage course.
6. Concommitant and concurrent programs in parent education and adult education to upgrade public understanding and improve attitudes toward and support of marriage and family life education (p. 183).

Rutledge (1966) listed the counselor's goals with engaged couples as follows:

1. To test the growth and growth potential of each personality. (Are they likely to grow together or apart?)
2. To develop skills in and to stimulate spontaneous communication, and
3. To expose areas of stress and develop problem solving skills.

However, the first task of the counselor, Rutledge stated, was "to help engaged couples examine their total readiness for marriage" (Rutledge, 1966, p. 18).

In summation, premarital courses were found to be generally effective but, frequently, effects were determined by less than optimal means. These evaluations have been criticized for relying on self-report measures, neglecting

follow-up and alternate treatment group studies, being atheoretical, loosely designed and non-specific as to their goals, and for failing to gear the program to the needs of the specific couples involved. A future evaluation should, therefore, attempt to meet each of these criticisms.

H. A Comment on Compulsory Marriage Preparation

In a comparative analysis of the opinions of judges, clergymen, and premarital counselors on issues pertinent to the legal implementation of compulsory premarital counseling (Leigh, 1976) agreement was demonstrated on the following issues:

1. the intention of the premarital amendment is to reduce high divorce rates;
2. the intention is to provide information about marriages;
3. premarital counseling will result in better marriages;
4. premarital counseling may help some couples decide not to get married;
5. premarital counseling should include discussions of sexuality, financial affairs, religious beliefs, how to get along with in-laws, and different marital life styles;
6. the premarital counselor should have at least a Bachelor's degree;
7. the counselor should have at least one course taught by a certified psychologist in premarital counseling;
8. satisfactory counseling shall be indicated by a

statement signed by the counselor;

9. couples not receiving permission to marry should return at a later date;
10. all couples regardless of age, should receive premarital counseling; and finally,
11. state legislatures should review the law to evaluate its efficiency.

Glendening and Wilson (1972), however, criticized the compulsory nature of certain premarital programs. When not believed to be needed compulsory counseling tended to generate resistance and the receptivity of couples was lessened to a great degree.

To have couples simply take a premarital program in order to fulfill an obligation required by the church or province defeats its purpose to some extent: to enhance couple openness and exploration, rather than generate stubborn resistance. This becomes a problem of attitude and motivation, and not legality. Administration must not preclude the benefits of a premarital program by making this evaluation other than a voluntary act, however, nor should we let people drift into marriage unprepared by removing the obligation. This controversy still exists in the literature.

I. Issues

> It is clear that "love is not enough"...love does not automatically teach communication skills or effective methods of conflict resolution, or the art of integrating their love into the rest of their existence; yet the absence of such knowledge can

lead to the death of love (Brandon, 1981, p. 54–55).

In order to determine which issues the literature indicates as important in marital relationships and which, therefore, qualify for inclusion in a premarital program, and should be addressed when evaluating its completeness, the following areas will be addressed:

1. those issues which are applied, hence recommended, by theorists when establishing premarital programs;
2. items deemed important for the achievement of a successful marriage,
3. issues which have been labelled as trouble spots in marriages by therapists and couples alike; and
4. those areas in which distress proved to be irreconcilable and culminated in a couple's decision to divorce.

An initial reporting of each area by various theorists will be provided, a summary of key issues presented, and a brief elaboration on each key issue deemed important in this subsection review will then follow.

Issues used in establishing premarital programs

Bader et al. (1980) developed a premarriage program, then tested the effectiveness of the program in improving marital adjustment. Those issues in each of their eight premarital sessions included: communication, family influences, finances, sexuality, the law and the ceremony, conflict in marriage, changing roles in marriage, and

building a better relationship.

In a premarital course (Lansing) re-designed by Rolfe (1977) the following content areas were stressed: marital interaction, money management, parenthood, religious dimensions, and sexuality.

The areas deemed most important in a premarital workshop designed by Ross (1977) were: communication, constructive fighting, children, love, sex, vocation (occupation), finances, religion, leisure time, and in-laws.

Those areas deemed as the most important in premarital counseling by Klemer (1965) were: housing, money matters, standard of living, relationship factors, education, employment, health, religion, in-laws, children, sexuality, leisure time, and wedding preparations.

A hypothetical premarital group counseling session established by Rutledge (1966) reported the following outline:

1. Engagement, love and sex (process and seriousness).
2. The parental home: state of inter-family relationships and how they will influence one's marriage and attitudes.
3. Beginning a new family: residence, responsibility, expectations of marriage, current and future conflicts, roles of husband and wife.
4. Work and finances.
5. Children and parenting.
6. A family faith.

7. Emotional and physical readiness for marriage.
8. Wedding and honeymoon: details and priorities.

A summary list of topics and items documented from an extensive research of the premarital literature (Schumm & Denton, 1980) emphasized the following content areas:

1. Expectations, goals, and needs
2. Communications and conflict resolution
3. Sexual adjustment
4. Religious lifestyle
5. Parents and in-laws
6. Marital roles and decision making
7. Parenting
8. Living arrangements
9. Relating to old and new friends
10. Intimacy without loss of individuality
11. Wedding ceremony
12. Premarital physical examination
13. Tests to evaluate couples' opinions, knowledge, and compatibility.

Each of the preceding issues were believed by these theorists to be necessary components of a premarital program. These will, therefore, be included in determining the specified content required in a premarriage program. Other content areas will be determined in the following sections.

Items necessary to achieve a successful marriage

Mace and Mace (1978) rank ordered ten items considered important for the achievement of a successful marriage:

1. Common goals and values
2. Commitment to growth
3. Communication skills
4. Creative use of conflict
5. Appreciation and affection
6. Agreement on gender roles
7. Cooperation and teamwork
8. Sexual fulfillment
9. Money management
10. Parent effectiveness (p. 64)

Landis and Landis (1973) listed the following contributing values to marital happiness as reported by 581 husband and wife pairs:

Values in Marriage	Husbands (N=581)	Wives (N=581)
Being able to communicate with each other	97%	99%
Being in love with each other	94	95
Emotional need for each other	88	95
Sexual relations	92	91
Children	81	84
Personality traits and/or habits of spouse	81	78
Shared recreational interests	67	73
Intellectual stimulation	65	74
Financial security	67	69
Shared cultural interests (ie. music, art)	60	61
Religion	49	55
Having an orderly home	56	48
In laws	43	53
Good food	32	28
Association with relatives	22	31
Possessions	24	17

(p. 7)

Issues labelled as trouble spots

Schumm and Denton (1980) listed the special problem areas affecting premarital couples as:

1. Premarital pregnancy
2. Financial stress
3. Anxiety over premarital sexual experience
4. General anxiety
5. Remarriage
6. Handicaps
7. Family opposition or coercion
8. Significant differences in race or religion

The top ten marital battlegrounds in rank order, according to Griffin (1974) were:

1. Sex
2. Communication and conflict resolution
3. Money
4. Marital roles and expectations
5. Declining "togetherness": emotional rapport and sharing, attentiveness and nonsexual affection
6. Children and child rearing practices
7. Trust and confidence
8. Work
9. In-laws
10. Religion

Geiss and O'Leary (1981) sought to determine directions for marital research by asking 250 members of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, who were

currently treating at least five couples, to rate the frequency, severity, and treatment difficulty of 29 commonly experienced problems. The ten most troublesome areas in a marriage relationship as rated by these therapists along with scores corresponding to the frequency attained on each issue were as follows:

1. Communication (361)
2. Unrealistic expectations of marriage or spouse (197)
3. Power struggles (135)
4. Serious individual problems (126)
5. Role conflict (95)
6. Lack of loving feelings (92)
7. Demonstration of affection (90)
8. Alcoholism (81)
9. Extra-marital affairs (80)
10. Sex (79)

Communication emerges as the topic of high priority followed by expectations and conflict management. These therapists then reported the following ten areas as being the most difficult to treat:

1. Alcoholism (275)
2. Lack of loving feelings (178)
3. Serious individual problems (144)
4. Power struggles (129)
5. Addictive behavior other than alcoholism (104)
6. Value conflicts (92)
7. Physical abuse (90)

8. Unrealistic expectations of marriage or spouse (84)
9. Extra-marital affairs (78)
10. Incest (62)

Five of the most frequent problem areas, including the two top ranking, were not considered by these therapists to be among the most difficult to treat. This information is valuable in that some of the most frequent trouble spots in relationships are reported as being successfully treatable, therefore, perhaps early detection of these problems within a premarital program could avoid a full-blown problem later in the marriage.

Areas which culminated in the decision to divorce

Husbands' and wives' marital goals and criteria for satisfaction were reported to be remarkably similar (Levinger, 1966). However when dissatisfaction arised, complaints were of a more diverse nature. Levinger (1966) examined the complaints of 600 couples applying for divorce and looked at husband-wife and social-class relationship comparisons. Wives' complaints exceeded husbands' by an approximate ratio of two to one (2:1). Wives complained eleven times more frequently (11:1) about physical abuse, four times more frequently (4:1) about financial problems and drinking, and three times more frequently (3:1) about verbal abuse. Other categories in which wives' complaints exceeded husbands' were neglect of home and children, lack of love, and mental cruelty. Husbands' complaints exceeded

those of their wives only in the areas of in-law trouble (5:2) and sexual incompatibility (3:2).

Complaint patterns also differed across socioeconomic class. Lower-class wives complained most about financial problems, physical abuse, and drinking, whereas middle class wives complained more about lack of love, infidelity, and excessive demands. Middle-class husbands were similar to their wives in that their main concern was with lack of love, whereas the lower-status husbands were more apt to complain of their wife's infidelity. Although complaints were directed toward the same relationship, complaints differed for each spouse. Suggested is a difference in interpretation, or perception, of the main cause underlying the trouble in their relationships. These couples were unable to find mutual ground upon which to base their marriage, and upon which to explain its source of demise.

According to Goode (1976), "One way of looking at divorce is to relate background variables to divorce proneness (Goode, 1976: 538-39). Characteristics such as an urban background, marriage at a young age, short acquaintanceship, a short engagement, parents with as unhappy marriage, non-attenders of church, kin disapproval of marriage, dissimilar backgrounds, and disagreement of husband and wife role obligations yield a greater proneness to divorce" (cited in Ramu, 1979, p. 135).

Brody and Osborne (1980) interviewed couples whose marriages of over twenty years had broken up. Their

summation of why these couples divorced was: "societal permission, midlife mortality messages and reappraisal on the part of the men, long-standing and unresolved problems centering around sex and communication, drinking, grievance stockpiling, and emotional and intellectual distancing" (Brody & Osborne, 1980, p. 279).

Albrecht and Kunz (1980) looked at major problems which existed in the marriages of 500 respondents which culminated in their decision to divorce. Many had expectations of marriage and their spouse which were not met, and many based their level of satisfaction on comparisons with other marriages. These authors point out, however, that most couples unknowingly compared the backstage realities of their relationships with the public frontstages of other couples' relationships. The following reasons were given as the predominant factors in their decisions to divorce, and the frequency each factor was listed first by the respondents is indicated:

Main Factor in Decision to Divorce	All	M	F
Infidelity	168	74	94
No longer loved each other	103	47	56
Emotional problems	53	24	29
Financial problems	30	16	14
Physical abuse	29	0	29
Alcohol	25	5	20
Sexual problems	22	13	9
Problems with in laws	16	10	6
Neglect of children	11	2	9
Communication problems	10	3	7
Married too young	9	3	6
Job conflicts	7	3	4
Other	7	2	5

The three main barriers against divorce perceived by these same 500 respondents were:

Barriers	All	M	F
No financial support	156	20	136
Children	102	54	48
Personal religious beliefs	102	29	73

In all cases, the "advantages" of divorce overcame its "disadvantages." That is, all individuals perceived the escape from their bad relationships as preferable to the costs of divorce (Albrecht & Kunz, 1980).

To summarize, the following is a list of the key issues which were reviewed in this subsection and which were found to be important for inclusion in a premarriage program. The frequency score to the right of each issue indicates the number of times that particular issue was mentioned in the preceding subsection review.

Issue	Frequency
Sexuality	14
Communication	10
Money management	10
Parental responsibility	10
Conflict resolution	9
In laws and family influence	9
Religion	8
Role expectations	8
Love and demonstration of affection	7
Occupation(s)	5
Emotional stability	5
Alcohol or other addiction	5
Realistic expectations	4
Growth	3
Leisure	3
Living arrangements	3
Education	3
Age	3
Length of engagement	3
Wedding ceremony	3
Standard of living	3
Common goals	2
Health	2

In addition, the following issues received ackowledgement once: legal implications, cooperation and teamwork, friends, decision making, intimacy, racial differences, urban or rural background, length of acquaintanceship, parents' marital status and happiness, couple similarities, and trust and confidence.

The above list can be further condensed into the following areas:

1. Sexuality.
2. Communication: self-disclosure, mutual trust, expression of feelings, sharing of values and goals, establishing realistic expectations, and examining similarities and differences.

3. Finances: budgeting, how extra money will be spent, financial priorities, standard of living, housing, and occupation concerns.
4. Parental responsibility: cooperation and teamwork, planning of children, and parental expectations.
5. Conflict resolution: resolving differences, learning a problem solving process which will be useful during emotional crises and during relatively emotion-free problem solving, as in decision making.
6. In-laws: family influences on values brought into the marriage, family as intrusion and as support system.
7. Religion: similarities and differences, the role God will play in the marriage, values and beliefs.
8. Role expectations.
9. Leisure: time and activity priorities pertaining to family, friends, each other, and self, as well as differences and similarities on these issues.
10. Background variables: emotional and physical health, education, age, length of engagement, length of acquaintance, racial differences, urban or rural background, parents' marital status and level of marital happiness, couple similarities and differences.
11. Growth: growth is comprised of a positive and mutual movement in the direction toward future goals, increased love, trust, understanding, and awareness of self and spouse. This factor comprises the entire scope and direction of the marital relationship. Will the couple

grow together or grow apart?

12. Intimacy
13. Wedding ceremony
14. Legal implications: insurance, wills and estate, implications of divorce.

These, therefore, are the content areas deemed necessary in a premarital program as prescribed by this subsection review of all issues which are pertinent to premarital couples in the literature. In the following pages each of these key content areas will be elaborated on in greater detail, albeit briefly.

Sexuality

"Sexuality" includes anything pertaining to the maleness or femaleness of individuals within a human relationship. This encompasses, and supersedes, the issue of sexual intercourse. "Sex" (sexual intercourse) is a component of sexuality.

> ...men and women who experience a strong sexual attraction for each other, conclude that they are "in love," and proceed to marry on the basis of their sexual attraction, ignoring the fact that they have few values or interests in common, have little or no genuine admiration for each other, are bound to each other predominantly by dependency needs, have incompatible personalities and temperaments, and, in fact, have little or no authentic interest in each other as persons. Of course such relationships are doomed to failure.
> (Brandon, 1981, p. 46–47)

Of all couples interviewed whose marriages of over twenty years had dissolved, sex was unanimously viewed "as a

serious flaw in the marital fabric...Problems arose around pregnancy, infrequency, abstinence, physical attraction, orgasm, impotence, intimacy, affection and infidelity.... In most cases in a shroud of embarrassed silence" (Brody & Osborne, 1980, p. 272).

It has been well documented that sexual attraction disguised as love brings disenchantment (Griffin, 1974). However, love between marriage partners without sexual satisfaction is incomplete. Sexual satisfaction is important to the success of a marital relationship, and should be evaluated by couples preparing for marriage. This issue, as with all relationship issues, requires open disclosure and mutual problem solving. For example, in the area of contraception, birth control has generally been considered solely the woman's responsibility (Johnson & Johnson, 1980). Yet, "the best contraceptive use existed mainly within the context of a strong relationship where there was open and clear communication about birth control and mutual partner involvement" (Hacker, 1977, p. 1300). A thorough and mutual evaluation was, therefore, highly recommended for couples (DeVille & DeVille, 1980).

In summation, sex and sexuality is viewed as an important area for inclusion in a premarital program. Discussion of similar and dissimilar preferences as well as an encouragement of openness and self-disclosure should be initiated by a premarriage program.

Communication

A premarital program should initiate self-disclosure and exploration of attitudes in all areas cited in this literature review. "Learning to communicate with honesty, sincerity, and intensity is one of the greatest means whereby the unmarried can prepare for a meaningful life in marriage" (Rutledge, 1966, p. 21). "Communication is much more than the conscious, verbal transmission of messages. It includes all those processes by which people influence each other, whether verbal, gesticulatory, or the conscious and unconscious utilization of any or all organs of touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing, and balance. All impressions received from the self, from others, and from the total environment, and the retention of these as impressions for future reference, are integral parts of an individual's communication" (Rutledge, 1966, p. 49).

Although an extremely high value is placed upon open and honest communication by today's Canadian youth, the ability to reach this stage of communication is often not viewed as requiring effort to attain (Ramu, 1979). Instead, youth "tend to dismiss the difficulties faced by others with a naive faith that they will somehow do better--never fully understanding the means to the end as either unattainable or extremely difficult to achieve" (Ramu, 1979, p. 34-35).

Many theorists view communication as the lifeblood of a relationship and an essential ingredient in marital adjustment (Brandon, 1981; Whipple & Whittle, 1976;

Rutledge, 1966; Boyd, 1976; Miller, Nunnally & Wackman, 1976; Alexander, 1973; Bienvenu, 1970, 1971, 1975; Miller, Corrales & Wackman, 1975; Van Zoost, 1973). Brandon (1981) states that love relationships "are made or broken by the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of communication" (p. 145), and this in turn is subject to the quality of caring between partners.

Bienvenu (1970) lists elements which differentiate between good and poor communication in couples. These are: "the handling of anger and of differences, tone of voice, understanding, good listening habits, and self-disclosure. Factors which are elements of poor communication are nagging, conversational discourtesies, and uncommunicativeness" (Bienvenu, 1970, p. 26).

Margolin (1981) states negative communication and behaviors are more apt to be reciprocated in unhappy couples, "producing a chaotic household," than in happy households. In addition, "it appears that pleasing interactions are highest for young couples without any children, and then decline in the child rearing phases" (p. 340).

Communication is one of the major problems in marriage today (Whipple & Whittle, 1976). The means by which couples examine their differences, problem solve, and resolve conflicts is by way of communication. Its importance, therefore, cannot be understated. Complete freedom of speech with trust and without fear of consequence is vital to an

open pattern of mutual self-disclosure. Communication should focus on strengths as well as weaknesses in a relationship (Miller, Corrales & Wackman, 1975). Through the educative process of teaching couples honest versus defensive communication, "I" statements versus "you" statements, and specific training in active listening skills (open-ended questions, reflection, summation, etc.) improvement in communication skills and a greater amount of self-disclosure can be attained (Van Zoost, 1973; Miller, Nunnally & Wackman, 1976).

Boyd (1976) discovered specific interpersonal communication skills which differentiated couples with more satisfying from those with less satisfying marital relationships. The three major groups which provided this differentiation were in rank order:

1. the ability to send clear messages,
2. active listening, or receiving messages, and
3. the verbal expression of respect and esteem for one's spouse.

Miller, Corrales and Wackman (1975) identified several concepts which "appear to enrich and facilitate communication between intimate partners" (p. 145). These included: awareness, rules, disclosure and receptivity, skills, esteem building, and positive symmetry in husband-wife input. These theorists believed that by increasing a couple's effectiveness in communication, their ability to control or take charge of their relationship, was

"greatly enhanced." Yet, they hastened to urge the reader "not to regard training in communication as a panacea" (p. 143). It is not a cure-all.

In summation, the literature states the importance of communication in a relationship. Since the majority of couples entering a premarital program can be assumed to want a successful marriage and thus have the desire to establish good communication patterns with their partners, a premarital program should be geared toward helping couples recognize and establish good communication patterns, and specific skills in communication should be offered.

Finances

> Most marriages would turn out more satisfactorily if the contracting parties gave less thought to love and more to mental and emotional compatibilities, and every-day matters such as financial budgets, child rearing practices, social cooperation and willingness to share responsibility (Whipple & Whittle, 1976, p. 148).

The evaluation of individual priorities with regard to finances such as: the exploration of conflicting ideas regarding where money should be spent, how and by whom it is to be earned, the use of credit, who will handle the finances, financial priorities, standard of living, housing, and occupational concerns should be discussed by premarital couples. Partners may have conflicting values toward money. For example, one partner may subscribe to the "live for today, tomorrow may never come" ideal, whereas the other partner may have a totally different view and subscribe more

to a "save for a rainy day" or "waste not, want not" ideal. Attitudes and differences within the area of finances should be known and a compromise established before the wedding day. A partner's generosity and flamboyant style may be exhilirating and charming during the courtship phase, but a more critical perception of this behavior may take place after the marriage. Discussion of these issues should be initiated as a preventive measure against later crises in this area (Bader et al., 1981).

In summation, practical matters, such as finance, need to be addressed early in a relationship. Value differences could exist in this area and be responsible for later marital distress.

Children

Children play a large role in the happiness of a marital relationship. Unplanned children, when the couple is neither prepared for, nor desiring a child at that time in their lives, can become a "sapping obligation" (Griffin, 1974). If desired as an enhancement to the marital relationship, however, children can truly add joy and thanksgiving to the marriage.

The myth that children will hold a marriage together has been exposed as false (Olson, 1972; Johnson & Johnson, 1980). Without a solid marital base, the adding of greater responsibility and commitment only serves to further strain the marital relationship.

Marital stability is also affected by the "planning" of children (Johnson & Johnson, 1980). The importance of children having been planned was found to be important only for women, though. Men did not appear to be affected in either a positive or negative degree by this factor. Another variable, considered a component of the last, is whether or not a child is brought into the marriage from a previous relationship. Here again, men seem to accept this situation more readily. Couples experiencing these kinds of situations should, therefore, be encouraged to disclose fully their thoughts and feelings on these issues before marriage.

"Psychologists have found that children get along better when considered happy additions to the marriage rather than rulers of the home" (Whipple & Whittle, 1976, p. 141). If proper parenting techniques are implemented (as in Dreikurs and Grey (1964), or Dreikurs and Soltz (1970)) parenting is facilitated, but only to a certain degree. Conflicts arising between three, four, five, or more personalities within a family are potentially unavoidable and will, therefore, result in greater conflict within the home.

In Hale's (1976) conclusion regarding the effectiveness of a group discussion method of parenting education, it was found that this method "was effective in improving parental attitudes toward children, especially acceptance of children's bahaviors and feelings" (p. 4132).

In summation, in order to assist premarital couples in exploring differences in the area of parenting, discussion centering around the following issues should be encouraged:

1. Whether or not children are desired
2. Number of children desired
3. When the first child is to be conceived
4. The time between conceptions
5. Ways of parenting
6. Responsibilities of a mother
7. Responsibilities of a father
8. Expectations held for the children (values to be taught, goals to be achieved, etc.)

Conflict Resolution

> ...conflicts are a part of all human interactions; they are neither "good" nor "bad." There is even evidence that the frequency of conflicts in a relationship is unrelated to the health or satisfaction of that relationship. What *is* important is (a) the number of unresolved conflicts, and (b) the methods used to try to resolve conflicts (Gordon, 1974, p. 181).

As noted by Patterson, Hope, and Weiss (1975) a desire for behavior change in one's partner may begin with a request or discussion and, if ineffective, may escalate into a "coercion process." Unless specific training in conflict resolution skills occurs, the process tends to escalate into full blown combat.

Relationships are not destroyed by honest expression of anger. But relationships die every day as a consequence of

anger that is not expressed" (Brandon, 1981, p. 149). "In less well-adjusted families decisions become a power struggle" (Whipple & Whittle, 1976, p. 35). If these conflicts are not resolved, they contribute to the overall stress and deterioration of family relationships.

Rutledge (1966) postulates three types of conflict:

1. Acute, which is characterized by intense expressions of hostility which are usually transitory, but will disrupt the relationship if allowed to persist unresolved.
2. Progressive, which consists of "unresolved battles [which] leave them ready for renewed battle" (p. 34).
3. Habituated, which "applies to those issues in which the couple have not and will not agree" (p. 34).

Rutledge (1966) claims the result of conflict to be, "Various forms of withdrawal and withholding...[which] may take the form of refusal to talk and to show affection, sulking and pouting, frigidity, or impotence" (p. 34-35). Productive quarrelling, he claims, on the other hand, is a useful technique of adjustment if restricted to a distinct issue (or issues) as opposed to the individual as a whole or to their shortcomings. Therefore, conflict may either be an agent of growth and strengthening, better preparing the couple for the handling of future conflicts, or of destruction.

In a comparison of long-term changes in constructive conflict resolution for a group receiving this training skill in a premarriage program against one which did not

(Bader et al., 1980), a marked decrease in reporting conflict was evident for the trained group. The untrained group, however, appeared to avoid conflict areas totally. A dramatic increase in conflict was evident for this group one year following marriage. By contrast, the skills of the trained group to resolve conflicts appeared to increase over time.

Gordon's model of appropriate problem solving is based on the "family council" style of decision making and conflict resolution introduced by Adler and popularized by Dreikurs (1964; 1970). The process of this model is as follows:

1. define the problem,
2. generate as many solutions as possible,
3. evaluate the solutions,
4. mutually decide on the "best" solution,
5. collectively determine how to implement the decision, and
6. evaluate its success.

If couples could be encouraged to work together in a manner such as this, as opposed to working against one another, conflicts might more easily be resolved.

Ridley, Avery, Dent and Harrell (1981) noted that many premarital programs focused their efforts on general communication skills and little attention was given to teaching specific problem solving strategies. The primary goal of the Ridley et al. study was to train engaged couples

in a mutual problem solving process directed toward handling relationship differences. Both short-term and long-term effectiveness were demonstrated. The problem solving steps they employed were as follows:

Step1: explore the problem area. Active listening techniques were utilized (reflection, clarification, "I" statements, open-ended questions, summations, etc.) as well as owning one's own thoughts and feelings.

Step 2: define the problem in relationship terms. (Did it affect both persons to the same degree? Do both partners want it solved?)

Step 3: identify how each partner contributes to the problem. (Rarely is there a sole producer of a problem in a relationship.)

Step 4: state a relationship goal. The couple must agree on a goal stated in specific terms with reference to the behavior which must be increased or decreased.

Step 5: generate alternative solutions.

Step 6: evaluate alternative solutions.

Step 7: select the best solution and determine what role each partner will play in implementing it.

Step 8: implement the solution.

Step 9: evaluate the process. (Evaluate the progress at an agreed upon time, ie. days or weeks.)

Significant gains were noted in both communication skills and problem solving ability when this process was implemented with premarital couples (Ridley et al., 1981).

Consequently, a similar approach is recommended for premarital program utilization.

In summation, steps toward mutual conflict resolution and decision making strategies should be implemented by a premarital program. The guidelines stated above could serve as a model in this area.

In-Laws

Gurman (1979) states,

> I once heard Carl Whitaker say at a workshop that one of the greatest myths about marriage is the idea that "I didn't marry your family, I married you." This makes me wonder when it would be appropriate to involve the families of the two people planning to get married, when the couple goes for premarital counseling (p. 77).

A healthy family gives the couple a sense of an integrated whole and offers a solid foundation on which to lean. If tensions exist in the families, especially tensions associated with the marriage itself, these will soon filter into the marriage unless resolved. Couples need to recognize the role their families of origin will play in their own marriages, and how their respective upbringings will affect their expectations, role performances, and ultimate satisfaction in their relationships. A warning flag may be the amount of family interference with a couple's wedding plans. If families interfere on this day, meeting their own needs not to hurt anyone else's feelings, rather than letting this be the couple's day, then they will likely interfere after the wedding day also.

Therefore, one role of a premarital program would be to make couples more aware of family influences, and to initiate a process of exploration into arriving at agreements as to the degree and amount of time each wishes in-laws to play in their lives.

Religion

The topic of religion was not discussed in depth in the literature, however, it was repeatedly mentioned as an area of importance. One may assume that where differences exist, potential conflict may arise. A premarital program should, therefore, initiate a couple's close examination of their values and beliefs in this area, their similarities and differences, the role they believe that God will play in their lives and their expectations of one another and their children in this area. According to Rolfe (1977) no one religious group should be overwhelmingly represented. A call to ecumenism and an ecumenical approach are recommended.

Role Expectations

> What will destroy marriage is not change but the inability of individuals within it to change (Otto, 1970 in Olson, 1972, p. 390).

Role transitions necessarily occur throughout the life span of every individual. According to developmental theory, "patterns of action and interaction" change dramatically as both the individual and the environment change with the passage of time (Montgomery, 1982). Burr (1972) claims those

factors involved in the ease of role transition are:

1. anticipatory socialization,
2. role clarity and positive definition,
3. role conflict,
4. role incompatibility,
5. role compartmentalization ("playing roles in different physical locations or social situations" (p. 411).),
6. goal attainment (hindered or facilitated by a role),
7. value of goals (which affect their desired attainment),
8. length of time in a role,
9. availability of substitute gratifications,
10. amount of change required in a role transition, and
11. amount of normative change (ie. several roles at once),

Based upon these factors ease or difficulty experienced in role transitions are determined. In marriages of five years duration "household chores" were one of the number one issues in marital conflicts (Bader et al., 1980; Schumm & Denton, 1980; Griffin, 1974).

Role expectations are documented as being more in conflict today than in prior decades (Landis & Landis, 1973), and consequently, a substantial number of husbands and wives are experiencing role attitude-behavior incongruence (Araji, 1977). Based on data from 1154 married men and women, "both sexes tended to express egalitarian or role sharing attitudes, but women enact the majority of duties related to all roles with the exception of the provider role, which is mainly performed by men" (Araji,

1977, p. 309). In the past, men and women had clearly defined role expectations. In the words of Fisher (1972),

> Years ago, a man married a woman he felt might be a good cook, a good housekeeper, and a good mother to his children, while she expected her husband to be a good provider and a good father. Today, the expectations are for companionship and love....Such mutuality of expectations demands understanding of each other's deepest values" (in Hart, 1972, p. 156).

Expectations are no longer universal, but unique, and evaluated on the basis of individuals and the merging of very unique, and not entirely compatible personalities, as no two personalities are "perfectly" compatible (Hart, 1972). The majority of men express egalitarian attitudes, but these attitudes are not reflected in role behaviors (Afaji, 1977). Perhaps, as stated by Knox and Patrick (1971), a more critical look at behavior should take precedence in certain role consensus evaluations of one's future mate, as opposed to merely a verbal account. Couples preparing for marriage should bear in mind that "Lack of communication and conflicts regarding family responsibilities and roles were predominant factors in the decision to divorce" (Granvold, Pedler & Schellie, 1979, p. 383).

A premarital program should, therefore, encourage couples to evaluate their degree of consensus on role expectations and enactment. "Scanzoni (1972) views the most significant and profound phenomenon touching upon marriage as the fact that female and male roles are being altered and

becoming more interchangeable over time" (cited in Ramu, 1979, p. 61). Unless consensus can be reached on role enactment, dissent within the marriage will result.

Leisure

Once again, this area was repeatedly mentioned in the literature as an area of importance, but was not discussed in depth. It is assumed that time priorities in relation to family, friends, each other, and self must necessarily be discussed in this area as well as the activities which will be engaged in at these times. Differences and similarities should once again be examined and consensus reached. A premarital program is in a position to ensure that discussion of these issues takes place.

Background Variables

Background variables are anything a person brings into a marriage relationship. This includes, but is not limited to, personal experiences, mannerisms, preferences, characteristics, history, attitudes, etc.

Background variables comprise yet another area couples need to explore. As early as 1939, certain background variables were well documented as being important factors in marital adjustment (Burgess & Cottrell, 1939). At this time these variables included the following:

Background Variables Influencing Marital Adjustment
Age and age difference
Number of months engaged
Number of months known
Rural or urban residence before and after marriage
Type of neighborhood before and after marriage
Religion and church attendance
Education
Income, financial stability, and savings
Occupation and work stability
Emotional stability
Number of serious relationships
Number of memberships in social organizations
Birth position in family of orientation
Marital status of parents
Marital happiness of parents
Relationship with parents/siblings
Health
Weight difference
Number of friends
Attitude of parents toward marriage
Desire for children

These background factors, with the exception of weight difference, remain evident in more recent literature as well. For example, Lewis and Spanier (cited in Burr, Hill, Nye & Reiss, 1979) have systematically examined, evaluated, and categorized all of the obtainable empirical and theoretical propositions of social scientists who have investigated within this area, thus presenting a very thorough review of the literature. To Lewis and Spanier, the greater the similarity between premarital partners' background variables (personality, upbringing, beliefs, etc.), the greater their chance for achieving "marital quality." Lewis and Spanier used the concept of "marital quality" to indicate the wide range of terms usually employed (such as marital satisfaction, happiness, success,

integration, adjustment, etc.) which all couples strive for in their marriages. Lewis and Spanier viewed marital quality as being a dynamic, as opposed to static concept, which was considered to be the overall result of combining elements from two different backgrounds. That is, the greater homogamy in all areas, the greater likelihood of achieving marital quality. Finally, they defined the concept of "marital stability" as the outcome of a marriage, or rather, whether the marriage was dissolved by choice or by death.

Lewis and Spanier believed the greatest predictor of marital stability was marital quality. They condensed their findings to consist of 90 propositions. Included in these 90 propositions were first, second, and third-order propositions which graduated from a lesser to a more abstract degree. Since it would not be feasible to list all of these propositions, the general catagories with specifications as to their content will be outlined instead. The factors documented as positively influencing marital quality and, therefore, which are important for evaluation by premarital couples, are as follows:

Factors Influencing Marital Quality

Homogamy- the degree of "sameness" regarding race, socioeconomic status, religion, intelligence, age, and status.

Resources - positive self-concept, lacking neurotic behavior, higher level of education older age at first marriage, higher social class, greater physical and emotional health, greater level of interpersonal skill functioning, and the better acquainted a couple is before marriage.

Parental Models – high marital quality of family of orientation, happiness in childhood, good relationship with parents.

Support from Significant Others – approval of family and friends, liking of future in-laws.

Independent First-Order Propositions – conventionality, sexual behavior and value consistency, no pregnancy, motivation to marry is independent of problematic circumstances.

Socioeconomic Factors – high economic status of husband, economic stability, and higher income.

Wives' Employment – level of wife's satisfaction and amount of husband approval.

Household Composition – the fewer adults in the household other than husband-wife, the more a couple is able to control fertility according to their own desires.

Community Embeddedness – the greater the network of a couple's friends, the greater the couple's community participation, the less dense the residential population.

Positive Regard – the greater the perceived similarity between the spouses, ease of communication, perceived physical, mental, and sexual attractiveness of the other, the more positive the evaluations of the other, the more consensus in values, the more validation of the self by the other.

Emotional Gratification – the greater the expression of affection, the more esteem and respect between spouses, the greater the spouses' social-emotional performances, the more the spouses encourage each other's personal growth, the more equalitarian the marriage, the greater boundary maintenance, the greater emotional independence, the greater the love, the more sexual satisfaction, the greater congruence between one's ideal spousal concept and the actual concept of one's spouse, and the more the couple's identity as a couple.

Communication – the more the self-disclosure, the more the sharing of violations of expectations, the more accurate the

nonverbal communication, the greater the symbolic meaning between spouses, the greater the frequency of successful communication, the more accurate the role taking, the greater congruence of role perceptions, the more understanding, and the more empathy between spouses.

Role Fit – the more the need and role complementarity, the more congruence between role expectations and performances, the more similarity of personality traits, the more role sharing, the greater sexual compatibitity.

*Interaction – the greater the companionship, the more shated activities, the more the dyadic interpenetration, the less the degree of physical separation, the more effective the problem solving, and the greater the joint church attendance.

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*Paired with growth enhancement and the greater network of friends, over–enmeshment is unlikely to occur.

Since, according to Lewis and Spanier, background variables determine marital quality and marital quality determines marital stability, discussing those areas in which marital quality may be derived seems to be an essential part of a premarital program.

In a study where differences in background variables contributed to the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of married individuals. Grafton (1979) looked at differences between satisfied and dissatisfied couples' expectations of one another. She explored these expectation criteria across seven critical relationship dimensions: acceptance, conflict, cooperation, growth orientation, listening, self–disclosure, and trust. A significantly larger discrepancy between expectations and perceived spousal behavior was found for dissatisfied couples, with larger discrepancies existing for females than for males.

Background items found to be associated with satisfied couples were:

1. having some religious affiliation,
2. having higher income level,
3. having had good relationships with parents,
4. having had parents who were happily married, and
5. having had a happy childhood.

Three background variables which warrent individual mention, as determined by their prevalence in the literature, are: (1)age, (2)self-esteem, and (3)values.

Age

Age is also correlated with marital satisfaction in that the lower the age at marriage the greater the marital dissatisfaction (De Lissovoy, 1973; Lasswell, 1974). Being young at first marriage, they state, usually indicates economic problems, school drop out, unplanned pregnancy, etc. Lasswell (1974) states, the best marrying age is three years more than the average age at first marriage if the best marital stability and happiness are desired; that is, women after 25 years of age and men from 27 to 31 years of age. Since stability in marriage increases as the age at first marriage increases, these ages are considered the minimum. Lasswell also recommends that the first child be conceived three years following marriage so that a strong and stable marital relationship has had time to form.

Self-Esteem

Brandon (1981) had this to say about self-esteem:

> Of the various factors that are vital for the success of romantic love, none is more important than self-esteem. The first love affair we must consummate successfully is the love affair with ourselves. Only then we are ready for other love relationships... If we do not love ourselves, it is almost impossible to believe fully that we are loved by someone else. It is almost impossible to accept love (Brandon, 1981, p. 124).

Self-esteem is probably the most important factor in the marital relationship (Brandon, 1981; Whipple & Whittle, 1976). It is in fact vital to the life satisfaction of all individuals, married or otherwise. Brandon has found that people with similar levels of self-esteem tend to be attracted to one another. Individuals with high levels of self-esteem will seek out one another, as will those with medium or low levels of self-esteem. Unfortunately, the tragedy underlying most relationships is that the "overwhelming majority of human beings suffer from some feelings of self-esteem deficiency" (Brandon, 1981, p. 126). In the words of Whipple and Whittle (1976),

> ...the capacity to love one's mate is largely dependent on the personal feeling of self-worth. If one does not believe himself worth loving, he cannot accept love from another, no matter how enticingly offered. Confidence that you are an adequate, worthwhile, significant, kind, gentle, loving and therefore lovable human being is so essential to mental health that one cannot adequately function in the unique relationship we call marriage without it (p. 31).

If an individual's self-concept is deficient he or she will constantly look for confirmation of these beliefs, and will find them, no matter how the partner behaves. According to Brandon (1981), "love does not produce self-esteem; it may reinforce it but it cannot create it; still without self-esteem love cannot survive" (p. 55).

Values

According to Piercy and Schultz (1978), "As a couple's value differences generally increase, alternatives become more obvious, and the relationship consequently grows in a positive direction" (p. 175). They view the clarification of values as a useful process which enables couples to know themselves better, improve their understanding of one another, improve their relationships, and constructively manage their conflicts.

The clarification of values, according to their literature review, promotes: (1) the awareness of beliefs, (2) a willingness to communicate these beliefs, (3) consideration of alternatives, (4) consideration of consequences, and (5) the matching of actions with beliefs (Piercy & Schultz, 1978). This honest clarification of values then establishes more reality-based expectations of one's partner.

Strategies presented by the theorists to encourage values clarification involve a discussion of various

issues and value-laden statements (ie. equality, roles, sex is only for nighttime, marriage is forever, God exists and the church is important, etc.). Couples should be encouraged to discuss differences in values in a dyadic fashion whereby one speaks for three minutes, while the other listens, then they switch (Piercy & Schultz, 1978). They then examine changes in feelings of closeness with their partner and whether it is possible to continue relating to a partner who has these different values.

Communication skills are, therefore, necessary for this sharing of values. A generalization of this exercise format may also be utilized to examine other personality variables (ie. defensiveness, lack of self-esteem), and relationship factors, as well as any values owned by either individual.

Knox and Patrick (1971) stressed that behavior is an indicator of values and feelings. By asking couples to log the time that they spent eating, talking, drinking alcohol, engaging in sex, attending church, helping others, etc., they helped partners become more aware of each other's priorities and idiosyncrasies. Both pleasant and unpleasant discoveries were made when behaviors, instead of perceptions and verbalizations, were examined. (One might recall the Araji (1977) study where verbalized role attitudes and actual role behavior differed significantly.) The behavior logging exercise

initiated by the Knox and Patrick study caused many vital indicators of a relationship to surface. This technique might also be useful in a premarital program to initiate a couple's more thorough evaluation of self, partner, and relationship.

In summation, background variables are said to be important elements in achieving marital quality. Any areas in partners' backgrounds which differ could be possible causes of marital distress (due to disagreements). It is, therefore, recommended that all background variables be compared and contrasted by premarital couples, and particular attention should be paid to the areas of age, self-esteem, and values.

Growth

"Growth" is a very important part of a marital relationship as specified in the literature, yet is unfortunately very difficult to define. An attempt to present an operational definition will be made throughout this section.

"Growth" comprises the entire scope and direction of the marital relationship. It is this element that determines whether a couple will grow together or apart. Without growth, a relationship may be at risk of dissolution through "falling out of love." A counseling program does not exist which can restore the love two individuals once felt for one another, and perhaps, if this occurs it is sometimes best

for the individuals involved to dissolve the union, especially if staying together breeds misery and hinders individual growth.

The preventive method to safeguard against growing apart is unknown. The only safeguard for this is allowing each individual enough time to grow and mature to a fairly "permanent" degree, so that a "goodness of fit" between individuals without fear of change can occur. In this way they could be assured of not growing apart. However, human beings continually evolve. A state of permanence therefore can never be reached. When an individual ceases to grow he or she begins to regress. Human beings do not remain static. The same is true of a relationship. Brandon (1981) states,

> Life is motion. Not to move forward is to move backward. Life remains life only as long as it advances. If I am not evolving, I am decaying. If my relationship is not getting better, it is getting worse. If my partner and I are not growing together, we are dying together (p. 211).

The growth component, therefore, is as important to the marital relationship as self-esteem is to the individual. As self-esteem sustains happiness and life in the individual, growth sustains life in the couple.

Mace and Mace (1978) offer a dynamic view of marriage as "a fluid, flexible interaction process which can never be stable, never established or completed; a process of ongoing growth, adaptation, and change that never ceases, moves toward objectives but never completely arrives because the objectives themselves change" (p. 64). They conclude that

the best term to describe this process is "marital growth." Relationships are never static, they either show increased or decreased growth.

Whipple and Whittle (1976) list three forms of compatibility. Compatibility–One is "the goodness of fit between the partners' intrinsic characteristics... Compatibility–Two includes the background factors which have been found necessary for 'conjugal bliss'... Compatibility-Three is growth compatibility" (p. 5). To elaborate on the latter, they state:

> After marriage there is a cooling–off period lasting from some six months to possibly a year and a half. If, during this time, the couple is able to build a deep love to replace the fiery and exciting love of before marriage, they have an excellent chance of building something permanent. If this is not done, as happens in so many marriages, nothing but the icy coals are left; and these often turn to hostility and hatred (Whipple & Whittle, 1976, p. 135).

However, Whipple and Whittle do not define this deep love nor do they define the process by which it occurs. Brandon (1981) seems to describe the essence of this "growth compatibility" by elaborating upon the basic needs in a love relationship:

> There is the need to love, and to admire. There is the need to be loved, and to feel visible. There is the need of self–discovery. There is the need of sexual fulfillment. There is the need of fully experiencing oneself as a man or as a woman (p. 95)....Fascination, attraction, passion may be "born at first sight." Love is not. Love requires knowledge, and knowledge requires time (Brandon, 1981, p. 97).

This description still fails to define exactly what is meant

by this very important concept of "growth." Monte (1980), in speaking of Maslow's perspective on this issue takes the definition one step further and more clearly indicates elements involved in the "growth component," but still does not specifically define it.

> The rare individual who achieves the stage of self-actualization enters on a course of..."growth motivation." In the language of needs the self-actualized person develops Being-needs or B-values. He is no longer engaged on the road to "becoming" self-actualized, for he has successfully progressed through the hierarchy of basic needs. He now embarks on the growth process of living to enhance his being, to expand his knowledge of self and others, and to operationalize his personality in any activity that he undertakes (Monte, 1980, p. 563).

Although growth is considered a vital component in a healthy relationship, it has not been adequately defined. I will, therefore, put forth the following definition: growth within the marital relationship is viewed as a unified movement of both spouses toward greater levels of trust, love, understanding and the achieving of mutually set life goals which enhance goth spouses individually and familially.

Growth should not be confused with commitment. A couple who is committed to one another in marriage for religious reasons, for example, does not necessarily have a growing relationship. If they share a deep, emotional love commitment, however, then chances are that they do have a growing relationship.

In summation, growth has been outlined as an important component of a relationship. A growing relationship will thrive, whereas if a relationship is not growing it is dying. One might expect that the growth of both individuals would follow a similar direction if values, goals, ambitions, and dreams are shared by the couple. It could perhaps be emphasized in a premarital program that the greater similarity in shared goals, ambitions, ideals, recreation, etc., the greater the chance that the couple will grow in the same direction.

Intimacy

Another factor considered an essential component in a marital relationship is the intimacy component (Tolstedt & Stokes, 1983; Schaefer & Olson, 1981; Frey, Holley & L'Abate, 1979). Intimacy is often defined in terms of level or intensity of involvement (Schaefer & Olson, 1981). For example, the greater the sexual involvement the higher the level of physical intimacy. Schaefer & Olson (1981) further contend that most general conceptions of intimacy involve "a mutual need satisfaction" (p. 49).

Frey, Holley and L'Abate (1979) found support for the position that intimacy is found through the process of sharing hurt feelings. These theorists compared three methods of achieving emotional intimacy: the rational approach, the fair-fighting approach (creative display of aggression), and the sharing of hurt feelings approach. The

method chosen to evaluate emotional intimacy was to initiate, observe, and evaluate these three methods of conflict resolution. The study assumed that intimacy was achieved through the resolving, or processing, of conflicts.

Results clearly indicated that the sharing of hurt feelings approach was perceived "as the most intimate of conflict resolution." This approach was also seen as the most threatening and risky of the three. Dealing with anger in the fair-fighting and rational approaches appeared to deal with the "smoke" whereas sharing hurt feelings. according to L'Abate, dealt with the "fire."

Tolstedt and Stokes (1983) document three types of intimacy: verbal, affective, and physical. Verbal intimacy refers to the degree of self-disclosure on " a wide range of intimate or private issues" (p. 574). Affective intimacy "reflects feelings of closeness and emotional bonding, including intensity of liking, moral support, and ability to tolerate flaws in the significant other" (p. 574). Finally, physical intimacy "encompasses sex and other physical expressions of love" (p. 574).

> The three types of intimacy were highly predictive of both perceived marital satisfaction (R squ=.60) and a measure of thoughts and behaviors indicative of potential for divorce (R squ=.40). Measures of verbal and affective intimacy made stronger contributions to the prediction of marital satisfaction than did physical intimacy (Tolstedt & Stokes, 1983, p. 573).

As with the growth component, total intimacy can never be reached. In the words of Schaefer and Olson (1981),

"Intimacy is a process that occurs over time and is never completed or fully accomplished" (p. 50). Intimacy, reinforced by a daily commitment to share in love, must be worked at by both partners every day. This should be communicated to couples through a premarriage program.

Wedding Ceremony

The literature states that the planning of the wedding ceremony should be an area addressed by a premarital program, although no reasoning as to the validity of doing so is offered. Since it is an area which must be reported, as besed on the literature review, various handouts specifying the details of the ceremony could be made available to couples, questions answered, and referrals made as to where to obtain further information, if necessary.

Since couples are usually highly involved with plans for their wedding day, almost to the exclusion of all else, it is in this author's opinion that rather than focus on the details and events of the wedding ceremony, the focus should be shifted back to the reason they are celebrating this day in the first place: to examining themselves and the person they have selected to spend the rest of their lives with, and their readiness for and suitability in marriage. Their wedding day will end within a twenty-four hour period, whereas their lives and relationship will contine well beyond that day. A premarital program should take responsibility to shift the romantic "wedding day" focus of

couples, as delightful as its anticipation is, to the reason they are in fact getting married: themselves and their relationship. This author views the purpose of a premarital program as a step in preparation for marriage, not the wedding day.

Legal Implications

Legal implications in marriage include the drawing up of a will, obtaining suitable life insurance, and preparing oneself for divorce's possibilities, as well as understanding one's legal rights and duties within marriage. Contract marriages and the discussion of rights after a relationship has failed forces couples to be aware of the unpleasant realities which face many marriages today. Yet, some issues, such as contract marriages, may be serving a self-fulfilling prophecy: couples preparing for the termination of marriage before it has yet begun. Certain legal issues documented as important in marriage should be addressed in a premarital program. Issues presented as a summary of the Alberta provincial statutes regarding marriage are as follows:

1. Voluntary sexual relations for life to the exclusion of all others is legally binding.
2. Spouses agree to provide support for each other and any children parented through the marriage.
3. Legal aspects of credit.
4. The taking or not taking of the husband's name, and its

implications.

5. Property ownership.
6. Joint purchases and bank accounts.
7. Insurance needs.
8. Wills and estates.
9. Divorce implications (grounds, alimony, maintenance, protection orders).
10. Child adoption.
11. Illegitimacy.
12. Human rights.

(Alberta Women's Bureau, 1980)

Each of the above issues could be discussed with premarital couples when addressing this area.

J. Summary

In the preceding section generalized comments were made regarding the idealistic tendencies of the majority of premarital couples and cautions were encouraged in the area of marital readiness testing. It was shown that responses to these tests could be misleading and responses elicited were comprised of socially approved, as opposed to honest, statements.

Many theorists warn that the dating-mating selection can encourage the frequent and early occurrence of matrimony before maturity and readiness are established.

Cohabitation, as a preventive measure against marital distress was found to be unsupported. Cohabitation did not

teach couples to meet a long-term marital commitment. Premarital programs, on the other hand, address the issue of long-term marital commitment directly.

The preferred format of a premarital program recommended in the literature was the small group format where no one religious group was over-represented, an authoritarian overtone was avoided, and specific skills were taught to couples which would aid in their transition into marriage.

It was noted by many theorists that favorable premarital program effects have frequently been obtained. However, the means for obtaining these effects have been criticized. Therefore, further research in this area has been recommended.

A thorough review of the literature has been conducted investigating all avenues available which are pertinent to the area of premarital issues, and which should, therefore, be included in a premarriage program. This information is valuable in that some of the most frequent trouble spots in marital relationships were reported as being successfully treatable, and perhaps, with the early detection of these problems within a premarital program, couples might be able to prevent full-blown problems later in the marriage.

In summary, according to the preceding literature review, issues and skills in the following areas should be implemented when developing or conducting a premarital program: sex and sexuality; open and accepting communication

patterns; financial and home management; family planning and parenting; conflict resolution and decision making; in-law and family influences; value priorities (including those on religion, leisure time, etc.); role expectations and their consensus; the implications of background factors (including age at marriage, the ability to hold in esteem oneself and one's partner, emotional stability, etc.); the growth component in marriage; the capacity for intimacy; a focus on the relationship as opposed to the wedding ceremony, but providing literature and naming a referral source for more information; and finally, the legal implications in marriage. According to the literature review, each of these elements should be addressed in a premarital program.

K. Conceptualization

I have pursued every feasible avenue possible in the literature which might offer information which is important to premarital couples. Although not exhaustive, I feel the preceding review has covered the field well. The literature review has indicated several major themes relevant to this study. These themes are the product of my own perceptions and are the way in which I have pulled them from the literature. These themes can be conceptualized in the following manner:

The literature indicates that commitment to marriage characterizes premarital couples. The assumption that a clear commitment to marriage exists within "premarital"

couples who are actively taking part in a premarital program will be the definition of intent used in this thesis. Therefore, if premarital couples alter their marriage plans following participation in a selected premarital program, it can be said that it was due to the "eye-opening" influence of the course itself, and not because the marital commitment did not exist initially.

Idealization in premarital couples has been shown to exist. Premarital programs should, therefore, be designed to present reality based marital expectations in order to dispell romantically based idealizations which could later lead to disillusionment and distress in marriage.

The traditional dating-mating selection process has also been shown to operate detrimentally by pushing individuals into marriage universally and often before maturity and readiness are established. Attempts to break away from the traditional dating-mating game include alternate life styles such as cohabitation, communal living, etc. However, these do not necessarily ensure one will learn how to deal effectively with a long-term marital commitment. Rather, these provide alternatives to marital commitment. Premarital programs, by contrast, attempt to deal with the issue of long-term marital commitment directly.

Compulsory marriage preparation has been presented as a continuing controversy in the literature. As an act regulating education as mandatory, this concept is not new to western society. Laws regulating compulsory education for

the betterment of society and its members, have been a direct cause of mass increases in levels of knowledge throughout the country and have been in effect for many years. Perhaps another element in this controversy has been neglected, that being the childlike, and very human response: "they didn't have to, so why so we?" If this form of education were implemented universally, we would avoid the idea that somehow only certain couples are not to be trusted with their marital decisions. The gravity of the decision to marry would be ackowledged universally without exception and, like compulsory general education, would come to be accepted as a necessary good for both the people and society. The merit of education along these lines cannot be understated.

A great amount of the literature review has been devoted to establishing the required program content. Fourteen content areas have been prescribed in the literature. Looking specifically at some of the prescribed content areas, one continually finds emphasized the need of self-disclosure in a variety of areas as well as an implied preference for similarity (ie. in values, background, goals, priorities, esteem, etc.). Any areas in which differences exist can be potential areas of conflict. Since human beings are incapable of reading minds, they do not instinctively know the inner intricasies of their mate. Expectations and preferences in all areas specified, as well as differences and inhibitions, cannot be known unless explicitly expressed

by the partners.

Communication is a theme which seems to encompass all other content areas. Unless open communication in all relationship areas occurs, problems will not be resolved nor compromise established. The means by which partners can discover differences and establish a form of compromise is by way of communication. Communication, therefore, is seen as a major component in any relationship. Even when communication skills have been effectively learned, though, other relationship or individual problems may occur and affect the relationship. These problems may in turn produce symptomatic communication behavior. Barriers to communication could be due to one of three things: a lack of love and therefore an unwillingness to communicate; a lack of self-esteem resulting in a hesitancy or inability to communicate; or a lack of skill in how to communicate when both partners are willing. Training in communication skills would be of greatest benefit to the last group alone.

Certain content areas (such as children, finances, role expectations, etc.) can be related to yet another theme: realistic expectations. If couples are very young, of limited education, and of lower socioeconomic status, unrealistic expectations regarding their expected standard of living or "joyful duties" may persist. Even if an individual's characteristics are none of the above, it is highly probable that expectations can be slanted by false perceptions of others' relationships, or simply by imagined

beliefs regarding how the relationship will evolve. It is difficult for individuals to realistically appreciate what will happen in a marriage they have not yet experienced. Even if individuals have been married previously the marriage will be different because no two marriages can be the same. All individuals entering into marriage are unique and the combination of any two people creates a unique relationship. Therefore, each marriage is unique and deserves the respect and caution a very new and untried experience should be accorded.

A thorough relationship evaluation is necessary for all premarital couples, and premarriage programs are vital to our society in order to ensure that this occurs. That every relationship would continue as it began would be wonderful, but often (too often) these relationships end in misery. Every couple would benefit from an evaluation of individual, partner, and couple priorities with regard to all areas of their relationship. If an area is found to be irreconcilable, it is best known before the wedding than afterward.

L. Research Questions

During the course of this study, and in keeping with the guidelines proposed in Chapter I, several research questions will be addressed in order to establish the effects of a selected premarital program on a sample of premarital couples. The Premarital Relationship Evaluation

and Preparation Inventory (PREPI) will be used to measure the following research questions:

1. Will the content of a selected premarriage course offer the content specified in the literature?
2. Will couples who take a premarital course increase their level of discussion on specified issues, as measured by the PREPI, following participation in the program?
3. Will couples who participate in a premarital course achieve a greater degree of agreement on a wide variety of issues, as measured by the PREPI, than will nonparticipating couples?
4. Will individuals who take a premarital course achieve a greater degree of satisfaction on a wide variety of issues, as measured by the PREPI, then will nonparticipating individuals?
5. Will a re-evaluation of the decision to marry on the part of some couples, as measured by the PREPI, occur? If so, will this change be seen as positive or negative?
6. Will individuals who take part in a premarital course report perceived positive effects of the program in several predetermined areas, as measured by the PREPI?
7. Will a change in attitude regarding the selected program occur, as measured by the PREPI, follow participation? If so, will this change be seen as positive or negative?
8. Will individuals who take a good premarital course (as defined by its congruency with the literature) recommend it highly to others?

9. Will the incidence of marital distress be less among couples choosing to marry follow participation in the program (as measured by a follow-up study)?

Only 1 through 8 will be addressed at this time.

The selected premarital program will be evaluated in terms of the above research questions. In the analysis, if the answers are affirmative on each of these dimensions, than it will be said that the selected program is effective and well-worth attending. In a longitudinal study, if the program is proven effective, marital distress levels will be expected to be lower for these individuals than they would be for nonparticipating couples. However, it is only through a longitudinal study that the incidence of marital distress among participating couples will be determined and, within the present thesis, a longitudinal study is not possible. Therefore, the incidence of marital distress among the selected group of couples within this study will not be determined.

Following the program, participating couples should be able to more realistically evaluate their total preparedness for marriage and thus make wiser, more appropriate choices to ensure their happiness in marriage than would nonparticipating couples.

III. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

In order to establish the design of the study, the following format will be adhered to:

1. recommendations which were stated in reference to a study design in the literature will be noted,
2. several alternative approaches to the study will be presented,
3. the final design selected for the study will be described,
4. the subjects of the study will be described, and
5. the premarital program selection process will be presented.

A. Recommendations noted in the literature

As stated in the literature review several theorists expressed criticisms toward various premarital program evaluations for their lack of (1) objective measures, (2) the use of control groups, and (3) an evaluation of long-range effects (Gurman & Kniskern, 1977; Bader et al., 1980; Schumm & Denton, 1979). In short, criticisms encompassed the lack of well researched designs into the effectiveness of marriage preparation programs. Schumm and Denton (1979) specifically criticized the lack of comparisons involving alternate treatment groups participating in the same program, and further claimed that such studies frequently obtain mixed results.

In this author's opinion, a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of a premarital program would attempt to meet and overcome each of these criteria. The present study met all but one of these criteria: the time frame allotted did not allow for a follow-up study. A follow-up study, however, is recommended to test long-range effects.

B. Alternative approaches

Several alternative approaches to this study were considered before the final method was selected. The initial research design considered involved a pretest and posttest design of a treatment group against a group of controls through the use of a standardized instrument. Testing the various areas deemed important by the literature through a standardized instrument seemed ideal. However, no such all inclusive instrument was obtainable for this study.

Many instruments were available which purported to measure marital adjustment, premarital satisfaction, interpersonal relationships, handling of problems, dyadic adjustment, etc. However most of these instruments limited themselves to only one issue or component within the relationship. Also, most of these available instruments had no statistical reliability nor validity. Two of these instruments, one measuring communication (Bienvenu's Communication Inventory), the other measuring personal pathology (Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis) had good statistics, but were too limited in their scope for use

within this study.

Two other instruments, PREPARE II (premarital personal and relationship evaluation) by Olson, Fournier and Druckman (1979) and Marital Inventories, by Holman, Burr and Brown (1980) addressed a broader area of application for use with premarital couples, the former using an impressive scope of twelve scales, the latter using six. While the former reported reliability coefficients which averaged in the .70 range, the other offered no validity or reliability figures whatsoever. The latter, although addressing more issues than most other instruments, was again found to be too limited in its scope and, since it also lacked statistical data, it was not chosen for use in this study. PREPARE II, although very broad in scope and considered by this author to have been capable of measuring change in couples within many areas, would have had to have additional scales constructed in order to supplement the data to determine further effects of the premarriage course. Also, the cost required to score this instrument was found to exceed the budget of the study. Therefore, since no instrument could meet all specifications required, this approach was abandoned.

The second research alternative considered was to conduct in-depth interviews to enable the gathering of the abundant data required to evaluate the couples' attitudes, skills, and comments associated with the premarital program. This data was to be supplemented with test data in the form of questionnaires constructed expressly for the study. The

questionnaires would assess on a Likert scale all areas deemed important (by both the literature and the premarital program) as well as determine the changes which would occur as a result of the program. Problems arose when concerns of intrusiveness regarding the interviews and excessive paperwork were feared by one specific premarriage course (which already required a vast amount of paperwork from its couples) to cause a possible increase in their already high drop-out rate. Changes in the research design were, therefore, again thought to be necessary.

The third alternative was to condense the questionnaires and supplement this testing with interviews sought on an optional basis. However since the questionnaires appeared to be all-inclusive and would seek the same information as would the interviews, it was decided that the interviews be dropped altogether. Similar data from all couples could thus be obtained, and a possible halo effect avoided. This third method was, therefore, also abandoned and the fourth, and final, research alternative for this study adopted. This design is described as follows:

C. Procedure

The final design proposed for this study was that of a pretest and posttest of a group of engaged couples participating in a premarital program (Treatment 1), a pretest and posttest of a group of engaged couples waiting to participate in the program (Control), and a third testing

of this latter group once they too had completed the program (Treatment 2). In this manner two independent groups of couples could be assessed and two separate group evaluations of the effects of the selected program established. Both treatment groups could then be contrasted with the group receiving no treatment, and a greater validation of the results established.

TABLE 1

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

	Pretest		Posttest
T1	T1	----(program)----	T1
	Pretest	Pre/Post	Posttest
Con/T2	Con----(waiting)----	T2	----(program)----T2

Two forms of the Premarital Relationship Evaluation and Preparation Inventory (PREPI) were constructed for this purpose (Appendix I and Appendix J). Forms I and II of PREPI were identical, except for the open-ended questions, which were modified to serve as pre and post forms, and one additional scale measuring perceived effects of the program which was added to PREPI, form II (Appendix J). PREPI (form I and form II) was designed to evaluate the degree to which issues had been discussed to date by the couples, present attitudes toward the marriage preparation course, levels of satisfaction and degrees of agreement on various issues, and finally all comments and suggestions regarding any aspect of

a premarriage course.

Degree of descussion was determined by the level of discussion indicated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "very thoroughly" on each issue from pretest (Form I) to posttest (Form II).

Degree of agreement was determined by the level of agreement from pretest to posttest on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "total disagreement" to "complete agreement" on each issue.

Degree of satisfaction was determined on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "total dissatisfaction" to "total satisfaction" taken from pretest and posttest on each issue.

Perceived effects of the premarriage program was determined by a posttest 7-point Likert scale ranging from "directly affected for the worse" to "directly affected for the better" on each content area.

All other changes were determined by responses to open-ended questions from the pretest and posttest forms. Recommendations were based on results compiled from all information gathered.

PREPI, Form I (Appendix I), was mailed to all couples several weeks before their participation in the program. Follow-up letters were prepared in advance to be mailed to nonrespondents two and three weeks after PREPI, Form I, was sent. This process was repeated for each mailing. The first treatment group received two mailings, one before and one after the premarriage course. Those couples who registered

early enough for the second participation in the program acted as the controls and received three mailings. The first two mailings received by this group were parallel in time to those of the first treatment group, whereas their third mailing occurred after their participation in the program. Couples who registered late for the second treatment group could not be used as controls because of the time frame imposed by the study and, therefore, were subject to only two mailings, which took place before and after their participation in the program. These two mailings were parallel in time with the latter two mailings of the control group (see Table 2).

D. Subjects

Subjects were recruited from all engaged couples participating in the two Engaged Encounter weekends offered from March 2nd through 4th, and March 23rd through 25th in Edmonton, Alberta during 1984. This program was chosen for reasons outlined in section E. Couples were assigned to the T1 or Con/T2 groups depending upon the weekend in which they enrolled. Group 1 participated in the program on the March 2 to 4 weekend, while group 2 participated on the weekend of March 23 to 25. Early registrants for the second weekend also served as the control group. This group was tested before and after a no-treatment period which coincided simultaneously with the before and after treatment testing of group 1. Group 2 was then again tested following

treatment. Late registrants in group 2 were tested only before and after the second treatment weekend. We will call this latter group, group 3.

TABLE 2

Number of Subjects Throughout each Testing Phase

	Mailing #1	Mailing #2	Mailing #3
1. T1	Pre1 (30)--T1--	Post (14)	
2. Con/T2	Pre1 (18) ----	Pre2 (12) --T2--	Post (12)
3. T3		Pre1 (24) --T3--	Post (16)

Of 42 individuals in group 1 (T1), 30 completed and returned their initial forms. Of these 30, 14 completed and returned the final posttest. In group 2 (Con/T2) 18 individuals registered early enough to be placed in the control group. All 18 returned their initial questionnaires, however, this figure dropped to 12 on the second and third testing. Those individuals who registered later in group 2 were placed into the third group (T3) and, like group 1, were tested immediately before and following the Engaged Encounter program. Of 38 individuals in this latter group, 24 returned their initial forms. Of these 24, 16 were retained on the final testing. Overall, out of 72 individuals who responded initially, 42 complied with the completion of all forms required.

Since couples entered the program in a random (non-selective) manner, hence randomizing themselves as they came forward, it was not believed that there was a need to objectively randomize within this sample. All couples in both weekends were invited to participate in the study. General criteria available on nonparticipants was examined in order to establish whether or not a consistent variable was present in couples refraining from participation in the study. In this manner it was determined whether or not a bias was present.

E. Premarital Program Selection

There are many premarital programs available for study in the city of Edmonton, Alberta as well as in certain outlying areas (ie. Sherwood Park, St. Albert). Most religious denominations offer premarital programs (ie. the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, Christian Reform, and others) as do various social service agencies in the city (ie. Catholic Social Services). In designing this study it was necessary to select a particular premarital program (1) which would adhere to certain major format guidelines (as outlined in the literature), (2) in order to provide subjects for study, (3) in order to evaluate a program's effectiveness, and (4) in order to contrast a selected program's content with that prescribed in the literature. Only the format guidelines which aided the selection process need to be discussed at

this time.

Format guidelines

Most programs offered several formats which ranged from conjoint counseling and small group discussions to large group, or lecture, formats. While certain programs made extensive use of counselors and their skills, others prefered the use of lead couples who related to couples from their personal experiences. The latter format presented a visible and realistic picture of marriage, and often served a double role as models and group/couple facilitators.

A preferred format would combine the benefits of a small group format (as presented by the literature), an ecumenical approach (in order to be accessible to the general public), with an emphasis on relationship exploration and interchange in a multitude of areas.

These requirements naturally ruled out programs designed to accommodate 200 people at a time and also those whose formats relied solely on the lecture or "expert" approach. In addition, certain programs were not chosen because of the time frame imposed by the study (ie. those taking place over the course or many months of weekly sessions). These criteria aided in narrowing the selection.

In the final selection two programs were found to be particularly favorable to the study. Both offered intensive weekend sessions in small group format, were ecumenical, and encouraged dyadic interchange. One program maintained a

fairly heavy involvement with counselors while the other relied on the open modeling of actual marriage relationships. Since the former program appeared to take the stance of the "expert," and was more guarded toward an evaluation (yet indicated its approval), while the latter presented a reality based picture of marriage with emphasis on actual visible relationships and was very open toward the prospect of enhancing their program, the latter program was selected. That program was Catholic Engaged Encounter (CEE), or better known as simply Engaged Encounter (EE). Because this study's focus is on an in-depth evaluation of EE, and the program is so very important to this study, it is necessary both to provide a thorough description of EE for the readers, and in order to enable a contrast between its content and that described in the literature. The next chapter is devoted to this review.

IV. CATHOLIC ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

The following information has been gathered from research material, material provided by Engaged Encounter, and from interviews with the Edmonton Engaged Encounter coordinators.

History

Catholic Engaged Encounter, more often recognized as simply Engaged Encounter (EE), is an ecumenical (multi-denominational) program which has its roots in the Roman Catholic church. This program actually sprang from the Marriage Encounter (ME) movement which was begun by Father Gabriel Calvo in Spain during the 1950s (Hedlund, 1980). The ME program later spread to the United States whereupon, shortly afterward, another group borrowed its name "Marriage Encounter," and began holding similar sessions for married couples (Hedlund, 1980). However, certain methodologies differed between the two groups (ie. restriction of non-Catholics, group size, and others). Confusion between the two groups in leadership, purpose, and procedures resulted. This led to an eventual differentiation of both groups by name (Hedlund, 1980). The original group begun by Father Calvo was renamed National Marriage Encounter (NME), and the borrower renamed Marriage Encounter Worldwide (ME Worldwide). NME maintained Father Calvo's original ideal. The following quotation explains this philosophy.

The ME program, as originally conceived by Father

> Calvo, was based on the belief of the centrality of marriage and family relationships both for society and for religious faith and community. Calvo recognized a profound difference in the quality and depth of some marital relationships compared to others. He believed that the basis of the difference was the profound, mutual, dialogue that some couples experience. His program was developed with the intention of moving couples into a deep "I-Thou" relationship (Hedlund, 1980, p. 24).

According to Father Calvo, NME could not be understood apart from its theological origins. If the religious factor was divorced from the other elements of the program, NME would lose its "depth and richness of meaning." Hedlund (1980) explains this intent very well. He states, "The ultimate purpose of ME is the promotion of 'God's plan' which, for Calvo, involves a revolution of love and unity beginning with the couple and spreading to the family, the community and ultimately the world" (Hedlund, 1980, p. 41).

The underlying philosophy of NME involves the idea that marital relationships are of the utmost importance in the community. Since it is the responsibility of the church to strengthen love relationships and the "key" to these relationships is the "dialogue" that transpires, the NME program is designed to, above all, develop effective communication skills between partners. In this fashion the church believes the couples can intensify their love and knowledge of themselves and one another in relation to God and the world. "Marriage Encounter is not a magical cure-all, but a tool for teaching couples interpersonal communication" (Regula, 1975, p. 158).

NME was not designed as a religious disguise for deep psychological therapy. Instead, its primary concern was to initiate a genuine interpersonal sharing between spouses and foster deep moments of shared intimacy, including a sense of the sacred within this blessed union (Regula, 1975).

Team leaders in NME consist of 1, 2, or 3 married couples and a priest. The sessions are held on three consecutive days, usually from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. Four major stages are utilized in this program. These include "I," "We," "We-God," and "We-God-World."

The EE movement evolved out of NME and has been operating internationally since 1968, (Catholic Engaged Encounter (CEE), 1982). Its place of origin was Detroit, Michigan. The philosophy underlying EE is identical to that of NME, but whereas NME helps married couples enrich their marital communication, EE helps engaged couples enrich theirs. The EE program was developed specifically for nondistressed premarital couples who desire to obtain effective relationship skills, examine their similarities and dissimilarities, evaluate many issues relevant to marriage, and evaluate their commitment to, and readiness for marriage. This is seen as a necessary step toward enriching their relationship with one another, and evaluating their readiness for marriage.

Requirement

Many churches require engaged couples to participate in a premarital program before marriage, although the specific program required varies from priest to priest and minister to minister. Couples who choose EE over other programs usually do so because (1) of excellent referrals from friends and relatives, or (2) their priest or minister required it. This is not to say that those programs which are required are better than those which are not. Certain programs are geared toward a mass turnout of couples simply to fulfill this requirement and consequently lose much of their impact in the exchange.

Fee

A nominal fee is charged to each couple participating in EE which covers lodging, meals, and materials. The actual sessions are performed by volunteers and are therefore free of charge. No one is refused if they cannot afford these costs, however, therefore EE is accessible to everyone without exception.

Program Format

The EE format is simple. The lead couples, one junior and one senior, along with one priest give short talks and try to set the mood for reflection and consideration of various topics and key issues relevant to marital relationships, and the team offers a true account from their

personal lives on each topic. Following these talks the individuals are asked to privately reflect and write their responses to certain questions which have been asked by the team. The couples are then asked to come together to share what each has written by exchanging their written responses, reading them completely with a sincere effort to understand the other, then dialoguing about what each has written. The team does not give the "encounter." The "encounter" is given by each partner to one another through dialogue.

The team couples and priest function as facilitators and models by discarding their defenses and masks, and disclosing their feelings as honestly and openly as possible to the participating couples. This helps participating couples set aside their fears and try to share as the team has. The lead couples serve only as role models to facilitate this sharing however. They do not attempt to forcibly extract similar sharing from the participants. It is hoped, however, that the couples will feel free to disclose to their partners as the team has to the group. In addition, the sharing occurs only between partners. The depth of their encounter is therefore in the hands of each participant.

Time Frame

The EE program is presented in an unbroken time frame beginning Friday evening at 8:00 pm and ending Sunday afternoon at 4:30 pm. "A weekend stay is necessary to keep

the atmosphere generated by the Encounter — away from the distractions of every day lives" (EE brochure). The duration of the weekend itself is approximately 44 hours over the three day period, and approximately 13 weekends are held in Edmonton each year.

Participating Couples

A high percentage of individuals (usually one of the pair) are not Catholic. Most couples however plan to marry through the Catholic church. The weekend is designed to enhance a couple's relationship and intensify their knowledge of one another. If a couple is experiencing problems, therefore, the vulnerability which is encouraged to intensify one partner's knowledge of the other may sometimes result in increased conflict. The EE program is designed to enhance healthy relationships. It is not designed to remedy ailing relationships. Consequently, those couples who are found to be distressed are encouraged by the team to approach the priest for a consultation and, depending on the problem, a referral is made. In addition, individuals with either no, or antagonistic, feelings toward the religious overtone offered by the encounter might be alienated or offended by its presence in the weekend.

Atmosphere

The entire EE weekend is quiet and low key. The emphasis is on the partners and the exclusive exploration of

one another, their relationship, and their plans for the future. This is essentially conducted through private dialogue between partners. Following, or as a part of certain presentations, music is used to complement the material presented. Music is not on the program before the presentation on Unity (Saturday evening) and is played only at times which highlight the experience.

Dialogue Technique

Observation, reflection, and self-disclosure are key elements in the EE experience, and these are the elements of which "dialogue" is comprised. By contrast,"conversation" or "discussion" are intellectual and superficial means of communicating, whereas "dialogue" is risky, revealing and profound. Regula (1975) has the following to say regarding this form of self-disclosure.

> There are...certain conditions that must be present before a person will feel free to disclose himself. There must be a climate of trust, understanding, and acceptance. Not only must the listener possess these characteristics, but it is also the responsibility of the listener to communicate these values to the discloser. Another condition seems to be that the discloser must possess a considerable degree of security, self-acceptance, and self-esteem. Persons who are extremely insecure and dependent are reluctant to disclose themselves because of an exaggerated fear of rejection (Regula, 1975, p. 156).

Both the discloser and the listener therefore play active roles in "dialogue," and noncommunicativeness in either partner can be seen as a sign of pathology in that individual.

> One of the characteristics of a healthy personality is an ability to self-disclose with at least one other significant person. Conversely, every maladjusted person is not able or willing to disclose himself to another human being (Jourard, 1964 in Hedlund, 1980, p. 13).

Since the marital relationship is the most intimate of relationships, if one partner cannot disclose with that significant other, this should be a serious warning for the couple involved. Hedlund (1980) states, "the degree of self-disclosure appears to be a crucial factor in the healthy personality and one of the determinants of satisfying interpersonal relationships" (p. 15).

Certain conditions are necessary for self-disclosure. These include security or self-acceptance and the security and trust that the information disclosed will be held in confidence (Regula, 1975; Hedlund, 1980). Self-disclosure tends to increase with the greater similarity between discloser and listener, with the greater liking (Jourard, 1964; Regula, 1975; Hedlund, 1980), and also when both people are "increasingly transparent and self-revealing."

Factors that minimize self-disclosure include a "low self-concept, dislike of the listener, perceived personal differences, lack of trust, and lack of reciprocal self-disclosure" (Hedlund, 1980, p. 14).

Authentic dialogues produce closeness and increased intimacy with one's partner. Jourard (1971) found that disclosure usually begets disclosure. If subjects disclosed a great deal of personal information, the same was reciprocated. If disclosure was minimal, however, a minimal

amount of information was in turn revealed to them.

EE utilizes dialogue to help couples intensify their knowledge of one another and increase their capacity for sharing. The EE dialogue process involves reflecting on one's own feelings, writing them down, then exchanging them with one's partner and dialoging about them. Dialogue, Regula (1975) states, "has three stages involved in it: reflection on one's own feelings, self-disclosure to a significant other, and affirmation from a significant other" (p. 155). While the encounter calls the partners to self-disclose, it also calls them to accept and affirm the other's feelings.

"The pattern of reflection, writing and dialoging eliminates common communication difficulties such as interruption, double messages, failure to listen, and destructive humour" (Hedlund, 1980, p. 56). "But, most of all, authentic dialogues produce individual growth as well as growth in closeness to one another. As the individual struggles to reveal himself in dialogue to his spouse, he is simultaneously more clearly formulating his own identity and moving toward intimacy with his spouse" (Regula, 1975, p. 157)

Couples who will benefit the most, however, already have strong relationships, and are willing to risk this necessary sharing of themselves. If taken seriously, a great amount of information can be exchanged throughout the EE weekend.

Role of the Team

The weekend team consists of one senior couple (married at least 7 years, with children), a junior couple (with or without children, married from 1 to 6 years, who relate to the couples as peers). and a priest. Flexibility in chosing couples as "senior" or "junior" arises to fit the need (ie. acting junior couples may have senior qualifications). The leaders share themselves in a way that demonstrates their joy in marriage, or priesthood, as a committed way of life through God. Honesty is stressed and a closeness maintained to the guidelines of the church.

The lead persons function as central persons with whom the participants identify. Participants watch and learn as the team models self-disclosure, and relate personal experiences which are relevant to each issue. In addition, the team's role as central persons require them to take the initiative to greet the couples, set a calm, relaxed, and friendly atmosphere, and make the couples feel at ease. These lead persons conduct the sessions voluntarily and receive only intrinsic rewards for their efforts.

The team priest provides valuable input into the presentations. He allows himself to appear vulnerable by self-disclosing to the couples. In addition, he makes himself available for counseling, and refers couples as the need arises.

The team acts as models and facilitators. They model openness, acceptance and love. They provide the couples with

the opportunity to examine their commitment to one another, explore areas of possible disillusionment and reward, as well as offer them a clear view of what constitutes a "good Christian marriage." "The more transparent the central persons, the more responsive the participating couples become in their own reflections and dialogue" (Regula, 1975, p. 155). Therefore, the facilitating influence of the team is a crucial element in the encounter.

Leadership Training

The team does not profess to be professionals. They state at the onset their function is not as counselors, but as models who relate their personal experiences in a manner designed to encourage the participants to share and explore in a similar fashion. The team members undergo intense personal and relationship exploration, and leaders' presentations are carefully and regularly evaluated by themselves and each other to assure high quality and consistent performance at each encounter. Each individual has his or her own set of talks to prepare. These talks are approved by a workshop couple who is an experienced junior or senior couple. Workshop couples are appointed by the coordinators. Talks are presented in a manner which best communicates the intended message. In summation, the following points apply.

1. Workshop sessions provided in practice sessions according to written guidelines are a prerequisite for

leading an EE weekend.

2. A prior EE encounter, and preferably a Marriage Encounter as well, emotional and relationship stability, a strong faith, and a focus on giving oneself to the couples in this way are requisites for leading the EE weekend. Selection and judgments are personal ones made on the part of the coordinators.
3. Experienced couples lead in conjunction with newly trained couples.
4. Experienced couples and priests are retained for as long as they are willing or able to contribute.
5. Each lead couple or priest is required to write a real life example of a particular issue and these are presented to the couples on the EE weekend.

Coordination and Organization

Catholic Engaged Encounter, Edmonton is presently coordinated by a junior couple who have been involved with EE for approximately 5 years. They have personally presented at twenty-five EEs throughout this time period, and have acted as coordinators in the Edmonton area for the past 2 years. Coordinators can be either junior or senior and must have been a team couple for at least one year. Coordinators must possess a strong vision of EE and are expected to present at least two encounters per year. Coordinators are selected by vote by the involved EE community (anyone actively involved as team or support persons). Being an

international organization, EE, Edmonton is superseded by Western Canada, National, and International organizers. Meetings and conferences are held regularly in order to maintain uniformity of performance throughout all regions.

The Edmonton area coordinators, when approached, were most enthusiastic, and open to any evaluation which would enhance the quality of the EE program. The western and Canadian organizers, upon notification by the Edmonton coordinators regarding the prospect of such an evaluation, were both reported to be equally enthusiastic toward the project (Appendix H).

Theoretical Basis

Five theoretical models were found to be operating in the EE program.

1. Developmental Theory – The EE program continually stresses the ongoing struggles and changes experienced in the marital relationship. They emphasize the need to work daily on the marital commitment through the decision to love. In addition, the goal of marriage is toward unity. This is a growing struggle in which the partners must strive to continually overcome the natural evolutionary changes confronted in their everyday lives. This approach, being an evolving, growth-oriented process, is definitely reflective of developmental theory.
2. Humanistic Theory – Carl Rogers' theory in particular is

seen throughout the concepts presented. The one element of his theory most closely noted is "unconditional positive regard." Couples are repeatedly encouraged to accept themselves and their partners for who they are and where they're at. Unconditional acceptance is a prime concept taught.

3. Social Learning Theory – EE utilizes the modeling benefits described in the social learning theory as a vital part of its program. The team offers themselves to the couples as living models in order to facilitate their ability to share.
4. Communication Theory – Communication theory plays yet another active role in the EE program. The dialogue process is seen as the "key" to relationship enhancement, and is utilized as the core of the program itself.
5. Systems Theory – Systems theory is the final theoretical base evident in the EE program. Couples are made aware of their effect on the family, community, and world, and in turn discover how these effect their relationships.

Goals of the Program

Each couple's relationship is the orientation of the program. The goals of the program are therefore based on an increased understanding of the individual, his/her partner, and the relationship. The goals of the EE program include the following.

1. Awareness of self and partner.
2. Awareness of key issues relating to the stresses and satisfactions of marriage.
3. Awareness that the relationship requires daily work.
4. To learn to communicate openly and honestly with each other (dialogue).
5. To learn how each maintains one's own esteem and how it affects that of the other.
6. To learn acceptance (accepting the other person where they're at).
7. To ask for and to give forgiveness.
8. Try to put the guidelines presented for "arguing" into practice.
9. To assess expectations and good qualities in one's partner, and face this discrepancy. To answer the question, "Can I accept him or her without these changes?"
10. To learn the serial transition of love (romance, disillusionment, and true joy, which is the result of making the decision to love), recognize its commonality in all life, and its need for affirmation in marriage.
11. To learn the basic tools of good communication, decision making, knowing the benefits of a positive self-image, the decision to love, the power of forgiveness, and the goal of unity.
12. To learn how God can be an important part of married life, and to gain a view of what constitutes a Christian

marriage.

Program Content

The content of the EE program moves through 19 different stages which represent a sample of important issues which most couples will face during the course of establishing a marital relationship. The different issues couples are asked to address during the course of the weekend are not meant to represent an exhaustive list of concerns, although it is hoped that the majority of issues which are of common concern are addressed. The 19 stages can be further condensed into 4 main blocks of focus (CEE, 1982).

Following (1) the introduction, the first part of the weekend involves the "communication block," where the topics include (2) Encounter with me, (3) Encounter with we, (4) Openness in communication, and (5) Signs of a closed relationship. These serve as the basis on which future sharing takes place and on which the rest of the weekend builds.

Next follows the "marriage block," where topics include (6) Marriage is a vocation, (7) Marriage morality, (8) Decisions in marriage, and (9) Unity. At the conclusion of this block, the couples are encouraged to look at marriage as God has intended it. They state that rather than dreaming and wishing, dialogue and openness are the keys to successful marriage relationships.

The next block focuses on the topic of (10) Sexuality. This presentation, followed by (11) the question and answer rap session, impresses upon couples the value of sex as an extension of ourselves and our love. Sex is viewed as being a "beautiful form of communication that has the full blessing of Jesus." It is not just an isolated event, but is a "God-given gift" shared between partners. (12) A prayer session is then conducted on Saturday evening allowing the couples to reflect on the role and presence of God in their relationships.

The final block is comprised of (13) Betrothal, (14) Wedding, the beginning of our sacrament, (15) Two by two, (16) Sharing the vision, (17) Plan of life, and (18) Forgiveness and healing in marriage, followed by (19) the final liturgy. A brief description of each individual section along with their main concepts follows.

1. Introduction

The team welcomes the engaged couples, explains the flow of the weekend, encourages active participation, and sets the pattern of the weekend. Following team presentations, the couples are asked to (1) individually write responses to certain questions, (2) exchange these responses with their partners, then (3) read one another's responses thoroughly and dialogue. This occurs after each section. The team explains that they are not experts or professionals, but that they are sharing their lives with the couples because they care about

them and in this manner hope to help them prepare for and meet the demands of marriage. The team shares their nervousness and excitement for the weekend. They urge the participating couples to take responsibility for their own relationships, that there is always room for growth in a relationship, and that this experience should be viewed as only "the beginning of their preparation for a whole lifetime of marriage."

2. Encounter With Me

The tone of this talk is "serious and reflective," impressing upon couples the need for self-acceptance and self-awareness. The attempt is not to lecture on the necessity to love oneself before love can be accepted or expressed to another. Yet, this concept is derived from the "lived examples" the lead couples present. "We strive to present a positive image to others while attempting to hide the negative" is a concept discussed. In a marriage relationship it is stated that individuals must set aside their facades and risk being vulnerable, letting their partners know their inner selves. The concept, "God made me, and God doesn't make junk" is communicated. It is hoped that each individual will recognize their goodness and loveableness because "It is essential that each of us likes the gift of ourselves that we are giving to our spouse" (CEE, 1982, p. 7).

3. Encounter With We

In this section the focus is shifted from "self" to "us." Love is presented as a decision and the concept "we can control our relationship by deciding to love" is communicated. The team presents the idea of a serial, three-stage transition of love which reoccurs over and over again throughout the course of a marriage. They teach that it is common to experience (1) romance, (2) disillusionment, and (3) true joy. Recognizing disillusionment, rather than ignoring or dismissing it, is the first step toward doing something about it. Married life, it is stated, includes moments which are good, bad, and indifferent. A movement from the self-centered focus on one's own feelings to the outward focus on the good qualities of one's partner are encouraged. Feelings have a tendency to change, whereas the qualities of one's loved one don't. Perceptions and expectations may be made more realistic through premarriage evaluation. If these expectations can be listed, discrepencies assessed, and the resulting changes desired in one's partner faced, the final question remains, "can I accept him or her without these changes?" Answering this question in the affirmative, the team states, requires the "decision to love."

4. Openness in Communication

Many couples already believe they have open communication therefore good examples of communication

must be demonstrated before the distinction between "most" communication and "open, revealing, and listening" forms of communication can be understood. Communicated is the fact that we often "listen" with half an ear while planning what to say next. Couples are encouraged to risk being open and guidelines are presented "for arguing (not fighting)," and these are demonstrated through modeling by the lead couples. The rules offered for arguing include the following:

1. No name calling (except those affectionately used for one another).
2. No third parties. (The argument is between you and me).
3. No past history. (If it's already been settled, don't bring it up again.)
4. Stick to the subject. (Find the subject, don't go to other issues to prove your point.)
5. Don't hit below the belt. (Don't throw your partner's weakness in his/her face; you may win the battle and lose the war.)
6. Don't go to bed angry (finish the argument).
7. Maintain a sense of humor (laughter is sometimes the best medicine).
8. Hold hands. (This is the hardest rule because it takes a decision to love. It is guaranteed to keep your focus where it belongs, on the person who means more to you than anyone in the world.)

(CEE, 1982, p. 19)

The definition of "openness" in the EE program is to trust being loved and accepted by one's partner as one is. Openness is a decision very much like the decision to love. Sharing openly and honestly the feelings and thoughts one is presently experiencing provides "the foundation of a good relationship." The couples are asked to dialogue on the following areas:

1. Things about myself (thoughts, feelings, actions, fantasies) I find difficult to reveal to you.
2. The least open, and most risky, of the following areas:
   a. fear of failure
   b. responsibilities of marriage
   c. roles in marriage
   d. sex
   e. children
   f. religion
   g. in-laws
   h. drinking-drugs
   i. careers, yours and mine
   j. security
   k. the way you treat me
   l. friends
   m. other areas
3. Do I listen to you openly? (Be specific.) Do you listen to me openly?

(CEE, 1982, p. 21)

5. Signs of a Closed Relationship

"Marriage is not just living together. It is a growing relationship" (CEE, 1982, p. 22). In this section couples are taught that they must renew their involvement regularly or become closed. What partners don't talk about has a negative effect on their relationship.

Common pitfalls of a closed relationship involve preconceived ideas and expectations, idealizations, and myths (ie. things will improve after marriage, one doesn't have to work at marriage, we will live happily ever after, I will change my partner).

Not to expect change in feelings or in the relationship after marriage is naive. However, to attempt to enforce certain changes in one's partner is also an indication of unreality. There can be attempts at ignoring these trouble spots, but it is only through their direct examination that they can be resolved. Failure to dialogue on these areas leads to disillusionment and trouble later in the marriage.

Not sharing is sometimes viewed as concealing one's weaknesses from one's partner lest we create rejection and an unwillingness to marry. Ironically, it is only through complete openness that this closeness can be achieved.

6 Marriage is a Vocation

Marriage is presented as a "calling." The team impresses upon the couples God's calling to love and be loved, and how their chosen response to this calling is in the form of marriage (other forms include the religious or single life). No deep theological dissertations are offered, "simply an understanding that God calls us to love and we freely choose the lifestyle by which to answer His call" (CEE, 1982, p. 16). God calls us to experience this love, demonstrate the joy and conviction to love, and be an example to others through this love. Marriage as a vocation means to love as Christ loves us (accepting the other unconditionally) and this involves giving 100 percent and not waiting to be met halfway. "Marriage is a vocation" is answering the call from God to love.

7. Marriage Morality

As Jesus gave life, so we are called to give life. Marriage morality contains the message of the challenge and the gift of being life-giving, especially to one's spouse. It is the process by which one selflessly loves another. "Marriage is our training ground in life-giving. If we are unable to give life to someone who we know loves and cares for us, can we possibly extend this gift to our children, family and friends?" (CEE, 1982, p. 19) The message of this section involves "using the gift of life which we have received to draw

out the greatest and best of life that is in others, especially our spouse" (CEE, 1982, p. 29.

8. Decisions in Marriage

A set of guidelines are offered by the team for mutual decision making. The decision making process includes: (1) prayer, (2) discernment (gathering facts, seeking consultation, mutual discussion), (3) mutual agreement (making a decision that is mutually satisfying), (4) mutual responsibility (sharing responsibility for the decision), and (5) re-evaluation. The team emphasizes the need for compromise in decision making, and a certain amount of flexibility which is needed. Life-giving, or growth oriented, decision making as an ongoing lifestyle is a concept which is also impressed upon the couples. This process should become an integral part of the marriage as opposed to being used only during times of major decision making. Life-giving decisions take place in four areas:

1. relationship to each other,
2. relationship to others,
3. relationship to God, and
4. in everyday life situations.

Participating couples are encouraged to utilize the decision making process in several major areas (in-laws, friends, children, religion, leisure time, and careers).

9. Unity

The following statement reveals the strong place unity holds as a concept in the EE program. "Unity, not happiness, is the goal of marriage" (CEE, 1982, p. 45). Happiness, though, often accompanies unity.

Happiness and sadness are transitory feeling states subject to outside influences sometimes beyond our control. Unity, however, is permanent. It represents mutual support, closeness, and a continual striving for oneness. It involves a lifetime building process often enhanced by a daily decision to love. With it develops an inner peace and contentment which removes anxieties, and helps partners be themselves. Unity promotes acceptance, a desire to understand and be understood. Through a deep desire to know one's partner better one actually tries to experience the other's thoughts and feelings. Couples are encouraged to build their expectations on, and strive for, this concept of unity.

10. Sexuality

In this section the team attempts to convey information with an attitude of respect and joy. The team shares how their attitudes and expectations in this area have effected their relationship. They point out that a "sexual relationship needs and deserves to be worked at and talked about like any other area of our lives" (CEE, 1982, p. 39). The priest expresses a positive view toward sex and sexuality, stating that it

is part of God's plan and a gift the partners share with one another.

Human sexuality surpasses sexual intercourse in that it is "an integral part of every human being" (CEE, 1982, p. 39). (For example, the priest can "appreciate his masculinity in the context of his celibacy" (CEE, 1982, p. 39).) Intimacy, rather than sexual accomplishment, is the element in a love relationship which is enhanced by dialogue and encouraged in this section. In addition to the forementioned, several family planning alternatives are presented to the couples and referrals given, where further information may be sought. Relevant resource materials are later distributed as well.

11. Rap Session

At this time questions, which have previously been collected in a "question box" which was made accessible to the couples before hand, are read to the group. The couples and team collectively provide the best answers to the questions posed, although the couples themselves are encouraged to express their viewpoints fully before the team offers theirs (chances are that the couples will answer the questions completely without any elaboration from the team). This is an informal part of the weekend where couples gather on the floor in a circle and a snack of wine and cheese is provided.

12. Prayer Service

A candlelight ceremony is held at this time and soft music played during appropriate moments. An analogy is drawn between the candle and love, and how each couple's love is an extension of God's love. The couples are invited to each light a candle from the central candle representing God's love and to pray to God for what each would like most in their marriage. Music is played during the blessing (which is done by one or two members of the team for each couple) and is designed to set a prayerful mood (ie. "Lord, Teach Us To Pray" is played) and also to provide more privacy during prayers. They are then asked to share in the sacramental blessing and all pray for the fulfillment of their wishes. The priest concludes with a general blessing for all.

13. Betrothal

Betrothal is a time for the couples to evaluate their commitment to one another and assess where they are in their preparation for marriage. They are asked to conduct this evaluation by answering various questions and writing a betrothal pledge to their partners. This evaluation includes responding to the following statements:

1. Honestly evaluate where you are.
2. Explore your feelings of readiness, the pressures, the excitement.
3. If you are not ready, have the courage to admit this

> to yourself and your fiance. Use the time to write on your reluctance, your fears, and your honest feelings about this commitment. Realize the courage this takes (CEE, 1982, p. 53).

This is a time of decision for the couples. The team leaders, as representives of the faith community, pledge to support them regardless of their decisions. Finally, invitations are extended to the couples who would like to share their pledges with the group at the liturgy. This is the only time the original format is broken. An atmosphere of acceptance and honest sharing has by this time been built.

14. Wedding

The emphasis in this section is on reminding couples that "A wedding is a day... A marriage is a lifetime" (CEE, 1982, p. 54). Since couples so busily prepare for their big day, sometimes the reason for that day is lost in the preparations. Couples are asked once again to focus on their relationships and to fully realize the lifetime commitment on which they are about to embark. They are also told that the church sees matrimony as a sacrament where couples do not just give the sacrament to one another through their marriage vows, but they actually BECOME the sacrament in marriage. Following the ceremony they ARE the sacrament. In addition, the church sees marriage as a binding, irrevocable, and permanent covenant. To further stress

this message, the meaning of each word is defined:

> Binding – I can't ignore it when unenthusiastic or don't feel like it.
>
> Irrevocable – I can't quit.
>
> Permanent – There is no time limit when it expires (until death).
>
> Covenant – An unconditional relationship (I'll do my part whether or not you do yours). This is in contrast to a contract, which is a conditional agreement (I'll do my part only if you do yours). (CEE, 1982, p. 32)

15. Two By Two

During this stage couples are encouraged to share the joy of their love with others. When shared, love is intensified and brings joy to family, friends, and community. Couples are invited to be generous with their love and, like the disciples, to go forth two by two to love others.

16. Sharing the Vision

Couples are invited by the team members to share in their vision of universal marriage preparation. The history of the EE movement is presented as well as a financial breakdown of where their dollars have been spent. In conclusion, they are given the opportunity to commit "a part of themselves (money, time or talents) to this vision" (CEE, 1982, p. 61). A summary list of needy

areas is presented and envelopes and sign-up sheets circulated among the couples. At this time couples are also invited to write the team a letter in order to share what they have gained from the weekend.

17. Plan of Life

The purpose of this section is "to challenge couples to begin the ongoing process of formulating couple values and goals and setting the priorities necessary to achieve them" (CEE, 1982, p. 64). Couples are asked to expand on short- and long-range goals separately, then as a couple. They are reminded that, above all, their decisions and goals should promote unity. Couples are encouraged to draw up individual plans, compare these, and then plan as a couple all through their lives. Handout sheets are then distributed to take home for further dialogue.

18. Forgiveness in Marriage

Since the marital relationship is exceptionally intimate, it gives partners the power to hurt and heal. Rarely is one partner solely responsible. Both partners are, therefore, encouraged to take equal responsibilty for the hurts and healings that occur in their relationship.

After hurts have occurred, couples are asked to consider the manner in which they ask or grant forgiveness, both to their partners and to themselves. A

distinction is made between saying "I'm sorry" (placing the power in one's own hands) and "Will you forgive me?" (placing the power in the hands of one's partner). In addtion, when one's partner has been the major cause of a hurt, it is stressed that healing can be enhanced sooner by reaching out and saying, "I do forgive you," rather than stubbornly waiting for the other to ask one's forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a process that is described as including two elements: reconciliation and healing. Reconciliation is defined as "forgiveness, coming together after distance caused by hurts" (CEE, 1982, p. 68). "Healing is the disappearance of guilt feelings, mistrust, hurt and their replacement by feelings of inner peace, joy, greater love and inner growth" (CEE, 1982, p. 68).

The modeling of these struggles presented in an honest and open fashion by the team and then practiced by the couples themselves helps to ease the transition into this form of healing and facilitates its use within their own relationships. In concluding this section the couples are encouraged to both ask and grant forgiveness for any hurt that may have occurred during the weekend. This is "not a time to confess past sins, but to reconcile and heal a hurt" (CEE, 1982, p. 70).

19. The Final Liturgy

The priest celebrates mass with the couples and team. All are encouraged to attend whether Catholic or not. It is at the closing liturgy that the Betrothals written earlier in the day may be shared with the group, if anyone desires. This time can be the highlight of the weekend...a sense of coming together, unity and community...a sense of going out and beginning.

This section concludes the three day program and is followed by the distribution of various materials (family planning, marriage liturgy and meaning of baptism). Finally, blessings and best wishes are extended to all.

This also concludes the description of the Engaged Encounter premarriage program. It is obvious that a great deal of effort enters into this program, many areas are discussed and a great deal of relationship exploration between partners is initiated. Having presented a review of the literature, and a review of the program under study, we are now in a better position to contrast the content presented in each.

V. ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the analysis the following sequence will be adhered to:

1. the demographic characteristics of the sample will be analyzed,
2. possible intervening variables which may have affected the manner of response will be presented and discussed, and
3. all research questions, their findings, and statements affirming or negating each question will be presented.

A. Demographic Characteristics

Demographically, based on a oneway analysis of variance comparing all groups on initial pretests, no group was found to be significantly different at either the 0.10 or 0.05 level. That is, there was no significant difference found on any measures between groups on pretests. The groups are relatively the same, therefore, they will be combined for the following evaluation of demographic data.

In order to describe the demographic characteristics of the subjects studied, and to determine whether a sample bias exists, persons will be separated from the data and described as follows:

1. The characteristics of all persons having completed the initial pretesting will be described, in order to establish the characteristics of persons participating in the EE program (N=72).

2. The characteristics of people lost from Pre1 to Pre2 (group Con/T2) will be described, in order to determine whether a common element is evident in these persons to suggest a bias in the sample (N=6).
3. The characteristics of all persons lost from Pre to Post across all groups will be described in order to determine whether a common element is present which could again suggest a bias in the sample (N=24).

A crosstab analysis has been used to analyze all of the following demographic data.

Characteristics of all Individuals Tested

Sex

All individuals were contacted in couple pairs and, in each case, if one partner completed the questionnaires so did the other. Consequently, the number of males and females was equal across groups.

TABLE 3

Subjects Divided by Group and by Sex

	SEX		
GROUP	Male	Female	N
T1	15	15	30
Con/T2	9	9	18
T2	12	12	24
	36	36	72

Age

The subjects were divided according to three age groups (17 to 23 years, 23–1 to 25 years, and over 25 years) (see Table 12). A total of 23 individuals fell into the lower age group (M=7, F=16), twenty–two persons fell between the ages of 23 years 1 month and 25 years (M=12, F=10), and 27 individuals were over 25 years of age (M=17, F=10). The age range across all groups was 17 years 0 months to 32 years 6 months, with a mean age of 24 years 5 months.

First Marriage or Presence of Children

All but three individuals were being married for the first time (M=1, F=2) (Table 13). None of these individuals had children from a prior marriage, but of the remaining 69 persons in the sample, 4 claimed to have one child (M=1, F=3) (Table 14).

Length of Time Known

Individuals claimed to have known their partners between 6 months and 8 years (mean=2.5 years) (Table 15). Sixteen individuals stated they knew one another between 6 months and one year. Nineteen individuals stated they knew each other between one to two years, and 36 individuals claimed to have known one another over two years.

Length of Time Engaged

The length of time couples reported themselves to be engaged ranged from 1 month to 20 months (Table 16). Forty percent of the individuals claimed to have been engaged from 1 to 3 months (N=29), 14 percent reported their engagements to have been over 1 year (N=10), and the remaining 45 percent were fairly evenly distributed between 4 to 12 months (N=32) in terms of length of engagement.

Length of Time Until Married

In terms of the length of time until couples were to be married, the range was between 1 and 8 months (Table 17). Half of the couples were going to be married between 1 and 4 months from the time they took the EE course, while the other half were to be married between 5 and 8 months. Two individuals had not yet set a wedding date.

Occupation

Although the entire range of occupational categories was spanned (see Table 18), 41 percent of individuals attending the program fell into the semi-skilled occupational level. Twenty percent fell into the unskilled level, 10 percent in the skilled, and 16 percent into the semi-professional level or better. Eleven percent of the sample were currently students at the University of Alberta, and one single individual was

unemployed. Indicated, therefore, is a predominance of middle, or upper middle, class representation among the subjects.

Income

Forty-six percent of all individuals reported a monthly income of between one and two thousand dollars (Table 19). Of the remaining individuals, 13 percent had incomes which fell below these earnings, 23 percent earned between 2100 and 3000 dollars per month, 6 percent earned above 3100 dollars per month, and 12 percent were students and not presently drawing incomes. This would indicate a sample of mainly upper middle socioeconomic status individuals.

Education

In terms of the highest educational level attained, 31 percent of the sample had completed high school and 55 percent had gone on to either university or technical college (Table 20). Twenty-two percent of these individuals received a university degree. The remaining 14 percent of the sample had achieved less than a high school education.

Religious Preference

Regarding religious preference, because EE is an extension of the Catholic church, one might expect to find a great many Catholics in the program. This was in fact found to be true. Seventy-two percent of all

individuals in the sample claimed to be of the Roman Catholic faith (Table 21). Fourteen percent of the sample professed to either the Anglican, United or Lutheran faiths, and the remaining 14 percent claimed to hold no religious beliefs, nor belong to any denomination, whatsoever.

Reaction of Parents to the Marriage

The general reaction of most parents to the upcoming marriages of their children was perceived by 67 percent of the sample as being very positive (N=48) (Table 23). Twenty-six percent of the sample indicated that their parents' reaction was positive, while the remaining 7 percent reported either a neutral or negative response on the part of their parents toward the marriage.

Reaction of Friends to the Marriage

Few individuals were able to respond to the question regarding the perceived reaction of friends to the marriage due to an error which omitted this question from the questionnaire. Of the 20 individuals who received and returned the corrected questionnaires, though, 55 percent indicated the response of their friends was very positive and 45 percent claimed it was positive (Table 24).

Marital Status of Parents

Seventy-six percent of the sample claimed to come from homes where the parents were married and living together (Table 25). Eight percent came from homes where the parents were either separated or divorced, and the remainder came from homes where a parent was either single or remarried following the death of a spouse.

Current Living Arrangement

Thirty-nine percent of the sample claimed to still be residing with their parents (N=28), while 38 percent claimed to be living independently (either alone or with others) (N=27) (Table 26). The remaining 22 percent of the sample were living with their partners (N=16). Therefore, as many individuals were living independently (alone or with others) as there were living dependently (with parents), and almost a quarter of the sample were cohabitating with their partners.

Past and Present Urban or Rural Residence

The vast majority of individuals claimed to have lived most of their lives in a large city over 100,000 population (41 percent) (Table 27). Thirty-five percent had lived in various smaller urban communities (2500 to 100,000 population), and 24 percent had resided in either a rural (but not farm) or farm setting.

Currently, the majority of the sample resides in a large urban metropolis (72 percent), while the remaining

28 percent are fairly evenly scattered over various rural and smaller urban settings (Table 28).

Characteristics of Persons Lost from Pre1 to Pre2

The group of individuals lost from Pre1 to Pre2 did not differ in any significant or consistent way from the larger group on the basis of age, first marriage, presence of children, or length of time known, engaged or until married. Nor did this group differ in their level of occupation, income bracket, level of education, religious preference, nationality, or on any other relevant variable. No evidence of bias, therefore, was found to exist from this group.

Characteristics of all Persons Lost from Pretest to Posttest

Similar to the preceding paragraph describing the characteristics of persons lost from Pre1 to Pre2, no evidence has been found of any commonality in the groups of individuals lost from pretest to posttest. The characteristics of these individuals did not differ in any significant way from those of the larger group, nor was there a common element in this group to suggest a bias.

B. Analysis

Possible Intervening Variables

Fourteen variables: finances, children, role expectations, religion, sexuality, future goals, leisure,

in-laws, decision making, conflict resolution, commitment, communication, background factors, and personality factors, were used in a series of multivariate analyses of variance (Manovas). The Pillais multivariate test of significance was used on all Manovas. According to the Pillais multivariate test of significance, resulting from a multivariate analysis of variance (Manova), taken over these 14 variables, no difference was found between the vectors of pretest and posttest means based on the age or sex of the respondents.

Also, based on a Manova, collapsed across groups (T1, Con/T2, and T3), no evidence was found to state that one's living arrangement influenced the level of discussion within these 14 areas. Living arrangement (ie. with partner) may have influenced the thoroughness of a discussion. This, however, was not found to be the case. No difference existed between couples who lived together or apart.

A Manova also determined the difference between pre and posttest scores based on three groups dividing the length of time couples had known one another (6 to 12 months, 13 to 24 months, and 25 to 95 months). Significance was found, $F=(14,39)$, $p=.05$. Change, based on length of time known, was significant in three of the fourteen variables specified: (1) role expectations, (2) in-laws, and (3) conflict resolution (see Table 4).

TABLE 4

Pretest and Posttest Means for 3 Age Groups on Role Expectations, In-Laws, and Conflict Resolution. Significant Difference on Length of Time Known F=(14,39), p=.05

	Months Known	Pretest Means	Posttest Means	Difference
Role Expectations	6 to 12	3.534	3.943	.409
	13 to 24	2.727	3.531	.804
	25 to 96	3.477	4.229	.752
	for entire sample	3.256	3.958	.702
In Laws	6 to 12	2.25	3.437	1.187
	13 to 24	2.288	2.846	.558
	25 to 96	2.833	3.893	1.060
	for entire sample	2.553	3.482	.929
Conflict Resolution	6 to 12	2.736	3.764	1.028
	13 to 24	3.186	3.970	.784
	25 to 96	3.481	4.286	.805
	for entire sample	3.248	4.089	.841

Note Scores are based on a 5-point Likert scale.
Degree of discussion: Never 1 . . . 5 Very Thoroughly

Individuals who had known their partners from 13 to 24 months increased their scores most after participation in the EE program in the area of role expectations, relative to the other two groups. In the area of in-laws, the partners who had known each other for the least amount of time (6 to 12 months) were most affected by the EE program. This group was also the most affected in the area of conflict resolution.

RESEARCH QUESTION I

Research Question: Will the content of a selected premarriage course offer the content specified in the

literature?

Findings:

To recall, the content prescribed by the literature as important for inclusion in a premarital program included issues pertaining to the following: sexuality, communication, finances, children, conflict resolution, in-laws, religion, role expectations, leisure, background/personality variables, growth/commitment, intimacy, wedding ceremony, and legal implications. Engaged Encounter measured up very well against the literature in terms of content. This program covered 12 out of 14 of these areas, plus added a few of their own (ie. the concept of forgiveness). The two areas which the program could be expanded to include are finances and legal implications. It was found that these areas were the only two not addressed. Overall, however, Research Question I is answered in the affirmative. The content of EE is 86 percent congruent (12/14 content areas) with that specified as ideal in the literature.

RESEARCH QUESTION II

Research Question: Will couples who take a premarital course increase their degree of discussion on specified issues, as measured by the PREPI, following participation in the program?

Findings:

Based on a Manova, there was no significant difference between the vectors of mean differences on before and after measures for the first treatment (T1) and control (Con/T2) groups, $F=(14,23)$, $p=.219$. In terms of their overall means, the control group increased initially from pretest to pre/posttest having received no treatment in a comparable fashion to the first treatment group, having received treatment.

Univariate Anova tests of significance were then performed on the pretest and posttest mean scores of all 14 variables taken separately over the Control group to determine what changes had occurred following the no-treatment period (Con), and again on the final testing of this group to determine what changes had occurred following treatment (T2). A consistent trend was seen. There was an initial significant shift, or increase, in the degree of discussion in each of the 14 topic areas without treatment, however, a much larger shift occurred following treatment (see Table 5 and Figure A). In the analysis each variable was treated independently. Therefore, some significance might have been found purely because each variable was coming from the same group of individuals. However, the significant trend was pervasive across all variables and, therefore, precludes significance based on chance alone. Therefore, although this group did shift without treatment, an even greater shift occurred with treatment.

TABLE 5

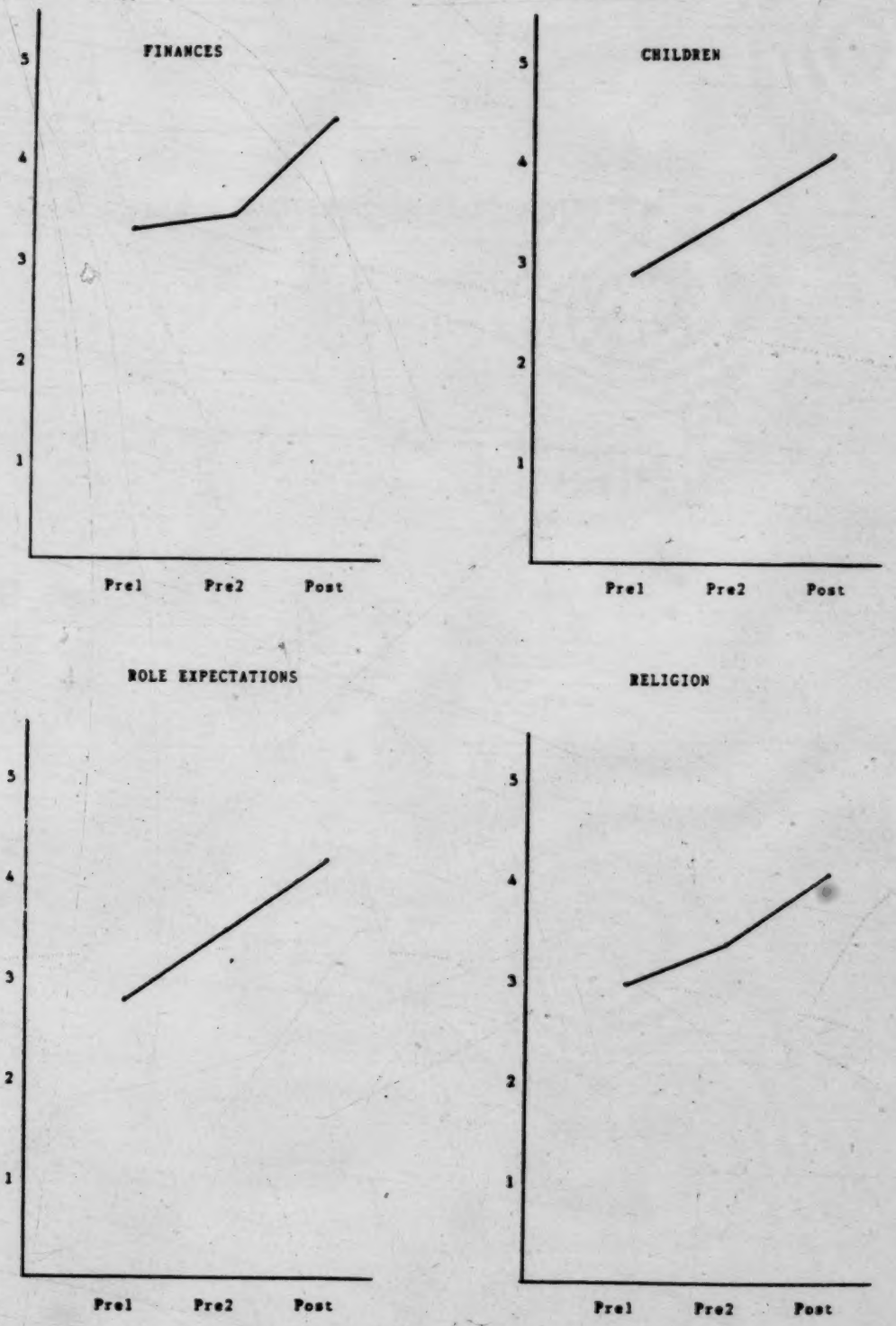
A Univariate Analysis of Variance (P=.001) of Group 2 (Con/T2) Following No-Treatment (Pre2) and Following Treatment (Post).

(Means)	Pre1	Pre2	Post
Finances	3.306	3.45	4.389
Children	2.911	3.482	4.149
Role Expectations	2.829	3.504	4.197
Religion	3.047	3.458	4.153
Sexuality	3.385	3.683	4.402
Future Goals	2.833	3.214	4.071
Leisure	2.972	3.323	4.244
In Laws	2.146	3.208	4.188
Decision Making	2.708	3.646	4.521
Conflict Resolution	2.861	3.454	4.319
Commitment	3.5	3.879	4.485
Communication	3.122	3.431	4.473
Background Factors	2.861	3.5	4.222
Personality Factors	3.339	3.639	4.185

Note All are significant at the .001 level.
Scores based on a 5-point Likert scale.
Degree of discussion: Never 1 . . . 5 Very Thoroughly
N=12

FIGURE A

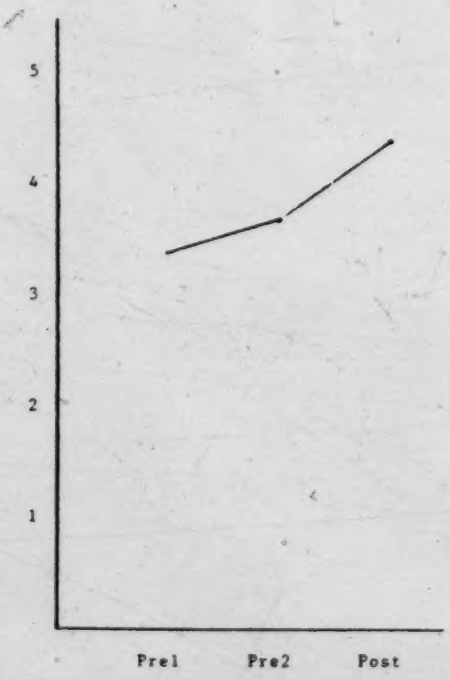
A UNIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF GROUP 2 (CON/T2) FOLLOWING NO-TREATMENT (PRE2) AND FOLLOWING TREATMENT (POST)



LEISURE

IN-LAWS

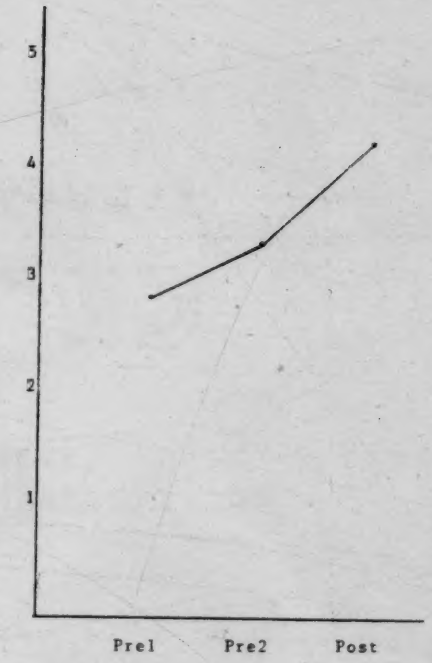
SEXUALITY



FUTURE GOALS

DECISION MAKING

CONFLICT RESOLUTION



COMMITMENT

COMMUNICATION

BACKGROUND FACTORS

PERSONALITY FACTORS

Looking at pretest and posttest means across the three treatment groups (T1, T2, and T3), no significant difference between groups following treatment in terms of a shift from pretest to posttest was noted, F=(14,39), p=.06. Based on a Manova, the groups seemed to have shifted in a fashion similar to each other. In addition, no significant difference was noted in the amount each group increased from pretest to posttest, F=(14.39), p=.59. The EE program seems, therefore, to have a consistent effect across groups. Of the 14 variables assessed, however, 4 appear to be more important in distinguishing the treatment groups. These areas include leisure, in-laws, future goals, and decision making. Pre-post changes between groups were more marked in these areas (see Table 6).

TABLE 6

Variables Important for Distinguishing the 3 Treatment Groups *

	Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Difference
Future Goals	T1	3.491	3.775	.284
	T2	3.214	4.071	.857
	T3	2.732	3.598	.866
for entire sample		3.123	3.792	.669
Leisure	T1	3.339	3.608	.269
	T2	3.323	4.243	.92
	T3	2.576	3.937	1.361
for entire sample		3.044	3.915	.871
In Laws	T1	2.75	3.339	.589
	T2	3.208	4.187	.979
	T3	1.891	3.078	1.187
for entire sample		2.553	3.482	.929
Decision Making	T1	3.214	3.982	.768
	T2	3.646	4.521	.875
	T3	2.453	4.109	1.656
for entire sample		3.048	4.184	1.136

Note Scores based on a 5-point Likert scale.
Degree of discussion: Never 1 . . . 5 Very Thoroughly
* Based on a Manova, 4 (of 14) variables appear to be more important for distinguishing the 3 treatment groups. Although more marked, the variations are not significant, F=(14,39), p=.59

Looking only at pretest and posttest differences in the 3 treatment groups (excluding the pre and posttest of the no-treatment group), based upon a Manova, there is a significant difference between pre and posttests across all groups on all 14 variables, F=(14,20), p=.00 (see Table 7). There was a significant increase in the degree of discussion in the areas of finance, children, role expectations, religion, sexuality, future goals, leisure, in-laws, decision making, conflict resolution, commitment,

communication, background factors, and personality variables (please refer to PREPI, Forms I and II, in Appendix I and J for a comprehensive list of topics dealt with). A notable increase in degree of discussion, therefore, occurred in all variables measured by the PREPI, forms I and II, and all groups varied in a similar fashion to one another. Research Question II is answered in the affirmative.

TABLE 7

Pre-Post Mean Changes Based on a Manova Across the 3 Treatment Groups on 14 Variables *

	Group	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Difference
Finances	T1	4.424	3.924	(.50)
	T2	3.45	4.389	.939
	T3	2.946	4.002	1.056
for entire sample		3.249	4.086	.837
Children	T1	3.571	3.796	.225
	T2	3.482	4.149	.667
	T3	2.909	3.86	.951
for entire sample		3.293	3.921	.628
Role Expectations	T1	3.254	3.805	.551
	T2	3.504	4.197	.693
	T3	3.072	3.914	.842
for entire sample		3.256	3.958	.702
Religion	T1	3.512	4.143	.631
	T2	3.458	4.153	.695
	T3	2.989	3.808	.819
for entire sample		3.298	4.018	.72
Sexuality	T1	3.786	4.05	.264
	T2	3.683	4.402	.719
	T3	3.411	4.368	.967
for entire sample		3.613	4.272	.659
Future Goals	T1	3.491	3.775	.284
	T2	3.214	4.071	.857
	T3	2.732	3.598	.866
for entire sample		3.123	3.792	.669
Leisure	T1	3.339	3.608	.269

	T2	3.323	4.243	.92
	T3	2.576	3.937	1.361
for entire sample		3.044	3.915	.871
In Laws	T1	2.75	3.339	.589
	T2	3.208	4.187	.979
	T3	1.891	3.078	1.187
for entire sample		2.553	3.482	.929
Decision Making	T1	3.214	3.982	.768
	T2	3.646	4.521	.875
	T3	2.453	4.109	1.656
for entire sample		3.048	4.184	1.136
Conflict Resolution	T1	3.468	3.857	.389
	T2	3.454	4.319	.865
	T3	2.901	4.118	1.217
for entire sample		3.248	4.089	.841
Commitment	T1	4.452	4.619	.167
	T2	3.944	4.528	.584
	T3	3.854	4.406	.552
for entire sample		4.079	4.512	.433
Communication	T1	3.62	4.22	.6
	T2	3.43	4.473	1.043
	T3	3.014	4.173	1.159
for entire sample		3.335	4.274	.939
Background Factors	T1	3.333	3.667	.334
	T2	3.5	4.222	.722
	T3	3.021	4.146	1.125
for entire sample		3.262	4.008	.746
Personality Factors	T1	3.698	3.883	.185
	T2	3.639	4.185	.546
	T3	3.391	4.062	.671
for entire sample		3.564	4.038	.474

Note Scores are based on a 5-point Likert scale.
Degree of discussion: Never 1 . . . 5 Very Thoroughly
* All increases are Significant, F=(14,20), p=.00

RESEARCH QUESTION III

Research Question: Will couples who participate in a premarital course achieve a greater degree of agreement on a wider variety of issues, as measured by the PREPI, than will nonparticipating couples?

Findings:

Based on a Manova, there was significant difference between pretest and posttest means on the degree of agreement reached within each topic area, F=(12,31), p=.002. Significance was found across all variables in this category (see Table 8).

TABLE 8

A Significant Manova of Before and After Comparisons of Mean Scores on Level of Agreement Across 12 Variables, F=(12,31), p=.002

	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Difference
Finances	5.375	6.094	.719
Children	5.315	5.906	.591
Role Expectations	5.062	5.906	.844
Religion	5.062	5.875	.813
Sexuality	5.219	6.156	.937
Future Goals	4.937	6.156	1.219
Leisure	4.906	5.812	.906
In Laws	4.781	5.562	.781
Decision Making	5.062	6.062	1.000
Conflict Resolution	4.969	5.844	.875
Commitment	5.906	6.954	.688
Communication	5.781	6.656	.875

Note Scores are based on a 7-point Likert scale.
Total Dissagreement 1 . . . 7 Total Agreement
Significant pre-post increases at the .01 level.

Also, from pretest to posttest, when individuals were asked if there were any personal areas they'd like to see more agreement on, there was a notable decrease in the reporting of these areas after participation in EE (see Table 9). All areas decreased in their reported frequency except those of finances, role expectations, and in-laws. After the EE program, there was an increase in the perceived need for greater agreement in the latter two areas, while

the frequency of reporting the area of finances was maintained. Therefore, following the EE program, in all but 3 areas, there was a greater degree of reported agreement on topics of personal concern. Of those individuals who stated that more agreement was necessary in certain areas, the areas of greatest reported frequency were: (1) conflict resolution, (2) religion, and (3) communication. Overall, a definite increase in the degree of agreement was evident. Research Question III is, therefore, answered in the affirmative.

TABLE 9

Before and After Frequencies of Personal Topics Reported as Needing More Agreement

	Before	After	Total Frequency	
Finances	4	4	8	
Children	4	0	4	
Roles	3	4	7	
Occupation	3	0	3	
Religion	9	5	14	*
Sexuality	2	0	2	
Future Goals	4	1	5	
Leisure	4	1	5	
In Laws	0	3	3	
Decision Making	4	2	6	
Conflict Resolution	8	6	14	*
Commitment	1	0	1	
Communication	7	2	9	*
Background Factors	1	1	2	
Personality Factors	1	0	1	

* Most frequently reported areas of concern.
N=55

RESEARCH QUESTION IV

Research Question: Will individuals who take a premarital course achieve a greater degree of satisfaction

on a wide variety of issues, as measured by the PREPI, than will nonparticipating individuals?

Findings:

Based on a Manova, a significant difference between pretest and posttest measures of satisfaction on the extent of discussion on 15 variables was found, F=(15,38), p=.004 (see Table 10). In all but 2 of 15 variables, individuals increased their degree of satisfaction following the EE program. The 2 exceptions were in the areas of religion and personality factors. Research Question IV is, therefore, answered in the affirmative.

TABLE 10

Based on a Manova, Significant Before and After Mean Scores of Satisfaction on 15 Variables F=(15,38), p=.004

	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Difference
Finances	5.205	5.872	.667 *
Children	5.82	6.333	.513 *
Role Expectations	5.0	5.718	.718 *
Occupation	5.59	6.077	.487 *
Religion	5.385	5.692	.307
Sexuality	5.692	6.256	.564 *
Future Goals	5.564	6.128	.564 *
Leisure	5.128	5.769	.641 *
In Laws	5.308	5.667	.359 *
Decision Making	5.41	6.051	.641 *
Conflict Resolution	5.205	6.000	.795 *
Commitment	6.231	6.667	.436 *
Communication	5.641	6.513	.872 *
Background Factors	5.564	6.051	.487 *
Personality Factors	5.692	5.949	.257

Note Scores are based on a 7-point Likert scale.
Extremely Dissatisfied 1 . . . 7 Completely Satisfied.
*Significant pre-post increases at the .01 level.

RESEARCH QUESTION V

Research Question: Will a re-evaluation of the decision to marry on the part of some couples, as measured by the PREPI, occur? If so, will this change be seen as positive or negative?

Findings:

Of all couples in the sample, not one indicated a change in their plans for marriage (see Table 38). One couple indicated the role EE was going to play in their final decision of marriage, but did not indicate which way they were influenced. Therefore, Research Question V is answered negatively.

RESEARCH QUESTION VI

Research Question: Will individuals who take part in a premarital course report perceived positive effects of the program in several predetermined areas, as measured by the PREPI?

Findings:

Based on a Manova, there was no overall significant difference between the three groups in terms of the effects of the program as perceived by the couples themselves, $F=(23,36)$, $p=.116$. That is, no instructor or content differences between the treatment groups were noted. Continuity and consistency throughout both weekends, therefore, seems evident.

Individuals reported an overall positive degree of being affected by the EE program in each area specified (see Table 11). These scores acted both as a measure of satisfactory performance in each area by EE, and also indicated areas of personal benefit derived from the program as perceived by the couples themselves. The couples rated the EE program as beneficial in all areas, without exception. Research Question VI is, therefore, answered affirmatively.

TABLE 11

Estimated Effects in Mean Scores of Engaged Encounter on 23 Variables as Perceived by the Participants (N=42)

	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Finances	5.0	1.051
Children	5.026	1.135
Role expectations	4.974	1.063
Religion	5.077	1.244
Sex & sexuality	5.102	1.046
Future goals	5.077	1.061
Leisure concerns	4.897	.968
In laws	4.846	.961
Decision making	5.359	1.112
Conflict resolution	5.41	1.069
Commitment	5.513	1.295
Communication	5.949	1.075
Background factors	4.718	.944
Personality variables	4.846	1.04
Perception of self	5.41	1.044
Perception of partner	5.538	.996
Expectations of marriage	5.385	1.138
Ability to state feelings	5.769	1.158
Ability to listen	5.641	1.158
To understand yourself as a couple	5.692	1.104
The concept of forgiveness	5.743	1.229
Openness with one another	5.82	1.121
Unity	5.795	1.128

Note Scores are based on a 7-point Likert scale.

directly affected for the worse 1 . . . 4 . . . 7 not affected by EE directly affected for the better

RESEARCH QUESTION VII

Research Question: Will a change in attitude regarding the selected program occur, as measured by the PREPI, follow participation? If so, will this change be seen as positive or negative?

Findings:

The overwhelming majority of subjects held a positive attitude toward the course both before and after participation (see Tables 29 and 33). Individuals often included more than one response for this question and all responses were logged. In general, and in proportion to the number of people who responded before and after the program, attitudes were generally maintained. Positive and neutral response ratios were maintained, while negative responses increased from a frequency of one to two. Overall, attitudes remained unchanged, therefore, Research Question VII is answered in the negative.

RESEARCH QUESTION VIII

Research Question: Will individuals who take a good quality premarital course (as defined by its congruency with the literature) highly recommend it to others?

Findings:

The vast majority of individuals who participated in EE stated that they would highly recommend the program to others (see Table 36). Certain individuals stated they already had. Research Question VIII, therefore, is answered affirmatively.

C. Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that premarital couples who participated in the Engaged Encounter premarriage program significantly increased their level of

discussion, agreement, and satisfaction in many specified areas. The general pattern of the results indicate that both males and females across all age groups increased their levels of discussion from pretest to posttest on all criteria measured. All but two Research Questions were answered in the affirmative. The two exceptions were (1) Research Question V, which asked, "Will a re-evaluation of the decision to marry on the part of some couples, as measured by the PREPI, occur?" and (2) Research Question VII, which asked, "Will a change in attitude regarding the selected program, as measured by the PREPI, follow participation?" All other Research Questions were answered affirmatively. The content of the EE program closely resembled that specified in the literature. The degree of discussion between partners increased following participation in EE. The level of agreement between partners increased following participation in EE. Two of 15 specified areas reflected increases in individuals' levels of satisfaction after having paricipated in EE. Perceived effects of EE were positive across all variables measured, and the vast majority of subjects said they would, if they had not already, recommend the EE program to others. Engaged Encounter is, therefore, concluded by this study to be an excellent premarriage course. It is further believed by this author that the implementation of the recommendations respectfully offered (see Discussion), will serve to enhance its excellence. In conclusion, it is clear from this study

that premarital couples would benefit from attending the premarriage course offered by Engaged Encounter.

Another conclusion can be made, borrowing from the literature, that if premarital individuals have thoroughly evaluated themselves and their relationships, as well as evaluated their mutual expectations and readiness for marriage, then future marital distress could be aleviated. Potential areas of conflict would have been discussed, compromise established in areas where differences existed, and a greater knowledge of themselves and more realistic expectations of marriage would have been established. This would then aleviate many potential strains which could lead to distress in marriage. Marital distress originating from misperceptions, disillusionment, unrealistic expectations, and a lack of a thorough discussion of relationship issues might, therefore, be prevented.

In conclusion, total exploration is seen as necessary, and is likely to occur only within very well-informed and highly motivated individuals, or rather, preventatively, while occurring within others only during a crisis situation. Few individuals do more than is required of them. It is, therefore, for the benefit of the majority that a preventive approach to marriage be instituted. If universally, rather than selectively, enforced perhaps marriage could be approached with the caution it so richly deserves, and the attitude of marriage preparation being needed only for a select few dispelled. Marriage can be a

wonderful institution and, through the efforts of the Engaged Encounter program, its success ratios might increase.

VI. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The primary goal of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness, or impact, of the Engaged Encounter program. Outcomes of the program were assessed by the degree to which the following criteria were met:

1. The degree of "fit" between the EE content criteria and those deemed important by the literature.
2. The degree of discussion on a wide variety of issues.
3. The degree of agreement on a wide variety of issues.
4. The degree of satisfaction on a wide variety of issues.
5. Whether some couples changed their plans for marriage in some way.
6. The degree of program effects perceived by the couples.
7. The degree of attitude change.
8. The degree of recommendations the program received by the attending couples.

The instrument used to collect the data was the Premarital Relationship Evaluation and Preparation Inventory (PREPI). This inventory was created expressly for this study, and was modified to produce two forms: Form I and Form II. These forms were then used, respectively, as pretest and posttest. A multivariate analysis of variance was used in order to avoid using the great number of t-tests that would have been required to correlate the data. Since individual t-tests would have treated each variable as though it was coming from an independent population, the margin for error would have been great. In order to reduce

the error, a multivariate analysis was selected.

In the analysis it was found that from pretest to posttest the control group shifted in a similar fashion with the first treatment group. Upon looking at the control group a little closer using a oneway analysis of variance it was shown that, although this group shifted without treatment, it shifted much more significantly with. The group differences that might have accounted for this occurrence were age, living arrangement, and length of time known.

It was thought that if the first treatment group was older, knew each other longer and/or were living with their partners to a great degree, this would have accounted for a smaller amount of shift since they would have probably discussed and resolved a great many of the various issues to a larger degree than the control group. Or, if the control group would have been younger, known each other over a shorter period of time, or had not been living with their partners to as great a degree, then the questionnaire may have initiated a greater amount of discussion before the Engaged Encounter program was taken.

These theories, however, were not supported. There appeared to be no significant difference between these two groups based on age, living arrangement, or length of time known. There were overall pre-post differences based on length of time known, but these differences were not distinct between groups, nor were they evident in more than 3, of 14, areas. Why this occurred, therefore, cannot be

adequately explained by this research.

Perhaps these issues had already been discussed among group 1 and there was no room for change, or they were not discussed among group 2 and a greater degree of change was, therefore, evident. Perhaps the individuals' perceptions of "thoroughly" and "very thoroughly" may have affected a difference in their responses, or the passage of time may have also been an element of change after no-treatment. Either way, across both groups a positive change occurred in each area and it can be said that all individuals had not previously discussed these areas to as great a degree as they had following the more thorough discussion initiated by the Engaged Encounter program.

Couples showed an increase in the degree of discussion on all topics from pretest to posttest which can be said to be reflective of the EE program itself. Individual topics within each of the 14 areas are too numerous to address separately, hence for a comprehensive list please refer to the questionnaires in Appendix I and J.

Similar significant increases in the levels of agreement and satisfaction are also directly attributed to the EE program. Engaged Encounter is, therefore, viewed as beneficial for all engaged couples. In addition, EE has been shown to be consistent across groups (weekends), as determined by similarity between groups in terms of their shift after participation in the program and their similarity of group ratings on the effects of EE in each

specified area.

A. Research Implications

Fluctuation in each area tested was constrained. This can in part be attributed to the great number of variables in the questionnaires. The vast quantity was impossible to work with, therefore, a mean score for each category was obtained. Fluctuations were masked by the overall mean within each category, and regressions to the mean were no doubt active in the analysis, again masking overall fluctuations.

The relatively small sample, as contrasted with the enormous quantity of variables, would have also restrained movement within each topic area, as would the relatively narrow 5-point Likert scale. A 7-point Likert scale was used to measure, for example, satisfaction and agreement factors and these scales appeared to offer more room for variation. Since many individuals appeared reluctant to mark the extreme scores (1 and 5), and stayed relatively close to the mean (3), this left merely a one-point margin for variation to occur. This small margin was easily masked by the other variables previously mentioned.

Using an ordinal scale of measurement, such as that provided by a Likert scale, indicates the degree each variable is being represented by each rank so that Rank 2, for example, represents a greater degree of the variable than does Rank 1. However, this scale does not indicate the *exact* degree of variation between ranks. Therefore, this represents an inherent inadequacy of the Likert scale. Using

mean scores from this scale should also preferably be avoided due to its ordinal nature. Variables should be restricted so that the individual score of each variable can be analyzed separately, as opposed to analyzing its mean derivative.

A predetermined order of questions, in order to maintain question and response consistency, should in future be maintained. On the PREPI a series of question, regarding the degree of agreement (on a 7-point Likert scale), was initially asked immediately following the specific variable it refered to, then these questions ceased following each scale separately (beginning with Future Goals) and were instead asked collectively for the remaining scales at the end of all the scales. In future, it would be recommended that this be avoided.

Regarding the design of the study, one might question what the consequences of a repeated administration of the PREPI might be, or rather, what effect the Con/T2 group may have experienced as a result of receiving one extra testing. To discover the answers to these questions the research design could be modified to include yet another control group which could be tested by itself (without continuing on into the program). One might then discover what effect the taking of the document has.

Another unforeseen problem was the probable occasional human tendency to circle numbers at random. The present structure of the questionnaires did not allow for the

spotting and separating of such individuals from the study, therefore, it is not known whether or not such forms were included in the analysis.

Based upon the above information, the following recommendations for future research are offered:

1. Restrict the number of variables. Choose only the most important variables based on the specified literature and EE content (ie. goals of the program). Rather than look at 15 or 20 items in each category, restrict it to one or two. A more sensitive instrument (based on the means of achieving these goals and measuring the expected change in these specified areas) with fewer variables would be desired. Avoid analyzing mean scores if a Likert scale is to be used.
2. Search for an alternate scale so that the precise degree of variation between specified "ranks" can be obtained. I cannot offer a suggestion here as the Likert scale seemed the best possible scale to suit the needs of this project. However, a search into an even better scale, if one exists, for this form of study would be encouraged.
3. Maintain the order of questions in a revised measuring instrument in order to avoid both question and response inconsistencies.
4. The number of individuals in the sample should be larger. A guideline to follow would be to have more individuals than variables in the study.
5. A larger scale should be utilized (ie. at least a

7-point Likert scale).

6. A lie scale should be introduced in order to discover random number responses.
7. This study could be replicated using a new testing instrument designed in keeping with the above suggestions. A pretest-posttest design with a new group of EE couples followed by a 6-month (minimum) follow-up is recommended.

B. Recommendations for Engaged Encounter

Based on all information gathered: statistical and open-ended questions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Two content areas which lacked noticeable effect by EE and were deemed important by the literature were (1) finances, and (2) legal implications. An expansion of the program to include presentations in these two specific areas would be desired.
2. Many suggestions were received urging the reduction in hours and presentations over the weekend. Other comments included the inability on the part of some couples to absorb the quantity of information being offered. For these reasons, it may be an advantage to spread the course over a greater number of days to more evenly distribute the content offered. Since many individuals work, weekdays would be ill-attended, and evenings would not remedy the fatigue. It is therefore suggested that the course be offered over 2 consecutive weekends (ie. 4 days with a possible 2 nights lodging) with fewer hours per day.
3. Couples stated that at times the time allotted for response (writing and dialogue) was insufficient. Perhaps the completion of responses could be monitored and areas which demand more time accommodated.
4. Although unspecified, comments were received regarding the length of certain presentations. It is unknown

whether those presentations referred to were offered at a time of high fatigue, or if indeed the presentations were too lengthy. Monitoring in this area might answer these questions as well.

5. Comments urging less repetition and less emphasis on religion were also received. In addition, the literature recommends a less overwhelming representation of one religious group. It is questionable as to whether the complaints of repetitiveness and religion overlap, since the role of the team is, in part, to bring God into every phase of the marital relationship. Perhaps the religious content, as it pertains to all aspects of a relationship could be voiced completely within the content devoted to religion and refrained from repetition in other areas.
6. More variety and free time in the program have also been requested. Perhaps the extension of days and reduction in the dense, fully packed hours may give rise to more breaks and free time in the schedule (ie. by cutting the hours per day). Variety might also be achieved by interjecting an occasional film into the program. Other creative ideas could be explored.
7. Comments regarding more group discussion, more team–couple interaction, and less intimate practices (ie. hugs, kisses, and prayers) with strangers (Table 37) seem to address the same issue: whether or not this is a time which is strictly for oneself and one's

partner, or should it include others in this context? This author believes a preparation for marriage course should emphasize within relationship exploration only during this time, although acknowledging the role others will certainly play in their relationship during the course of their marriage. A few days is little enough time to prepare for a step which will contract oneself to another for life. The recommendation offered therefore is: (a) to continue focusing on the couple only and not convert to "group" dynamics, (b) continue to encourage dyadic interchange (if a partner grows tired of conversing with the other after 3 days, how will he or she feel after 3 years?), and (c) refrain from expecting shared intimacy (ie. hugs, kisses, and prayers). Like the betrothal pledge, perhaps this sharing could be made on an optional basis or simply restricted to between partners.

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APPENDIX A

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

February 1, 1984

Dear

Congratulations, you're getting married! We wish you every success throughout the years ahead. At this time research is being conducted in order to discover better ways by which to ensure a more successful premarriage program, and ultimately more successful marriages. This is why we need your help.

You have been one of several couples carefully selected to participate in a study which will attempt to establish the effects and attitudes associated with the Engaged Encounter preparation for marriage course that you will be attending in March, 1984.

All comments and suggestions made by you are vital to the success of this study, and we sincerely encourage your cooperation, and appreciate the time and effort required on your part to complete the enclosed questionnaires. All responses will be kept completely confidential.

There are two questionnaires enclosed, one for each of you. I ask you both to please take the time during the next week to complete your forms and return them in the self-addressed, postpaid envelope that is provided. Your envelope is numbered so once your response is received, no further reminder notices will be sent.

You will again be contacted following your participation in the Engaged Encounter program, and we look forward to your cooperation at that time as well.

If you have any questions regarding this project, or concerns about how the information will be used, please call me, Linda Keep at 922-5477, of the supervisor of the project, Dr. Bill Hague at 432-3743.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Linda J. Keep
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Alberta

6-102 EDUCATION NORTH, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA • T6G 2G5 • TELEPHONE (403) 432-5245

APPENDIX B

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

February 1, 1984

Dear

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The design of the study is such that we will require your co-operation in the form of completing a questionnaire once more before your participation in the program and again following the program itself. We look forward to receiving your responses at these future times as well.

If you have any questions regarding this project, or concerns about how the information will be used, please call me, Linda Keep at 922-5477, or the supervisor of the project, Dr. Bill Hague at 432-3743.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Linda J. Keep
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Alberta

6-102 EDUCATION NORTH, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA • T6G 2G5 • TELEPHONE (403) 432-5245

APPENDIX C

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

February 17, 1984

Dear

Several weeks ago you received two questionnaires in order to help us determine your attitudes, expectations, and issues discussed to date before your scheduled involvement in the preparation for marriage course offered by Engaged Encounter, Edmonton. Although a large number of completed forms have been returned, we have not yet heard from you.

Your contribution is highly valued and essential to a thorough evaluation of this program. If you have not already done so, I urge you to please take the time soon to fill out your separate forms and return them in the self-addresed, postpaid envelope that was provided.

Again, I assure you that your responses will be kept completely confidential. If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this project, or difficulties related to the completion of the questionnaires, please call me, Linda Keep at 922-5477.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Linda J. Keep
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Alberta

6-102 EDUCATION NORTH, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA • T6G 2G5 • TELEPHONE (403) 432-5245

APPENDIX D

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

March 2, 1984

Dear

As notified earlier, we are again requesting your responses and comments regarding the Engaged Encounter preparation for marriage course that you will be attending in March, 1984.

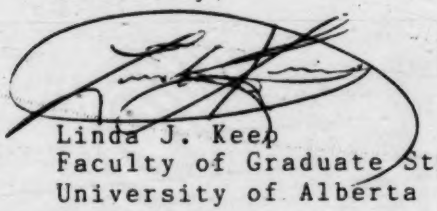
As before, two questionnaires are enclosed, one for each of you. I ask you both once again to please take the time during the next week to complete your forms and return them in the self-addressed, postpaid envelope that is provided. Your envelope is numbered so once your response is received, no further reminder notices will be sent.

You will notice that the enclosed questionnaires are identical to the first ones you received. This is because it is important for us to find out if any change has occurred within the period preceding the premarriage program, or as a result of the questionnaires themselves. A third, and final questionnaire, which is somewhat different from the first, will be mailed out following your participation in the Engaged Encounter program. We urge your continued cooperation and look forward to receiving your responses at that time as well.

Again, we assure you that all responses will be kept completely confidential. If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of the project, please call me, Linda Keep at 922-5477, or the supervisor of the project, Dr. Bill Hague at 432-3743.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Linda J. Keep
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Alberta

6-102 EDUCATION NORTH, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA • T6G 2G5 • TELEPHONE (403) 432-5245

APPENDIX E

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

March 17, 1984

Dear Engaged Encounter Couples,

Approximately one week ago you received two questionnaires in order to help us determine your attitudes, expectations, and issues discussed to date before your scheduled involvement in the preparation for marriage course offered by Engaged Encounter, Edmonton.

Your contribution is highly valued and essential to a thorough evaluation of this program. If you have not already done so, I urge you to please take the time soon to fill out your separate forms and return them in the self-addressed, postpaid envelope that was provided. If you have already completed and returned your forms I thank you very much and look forward to receiving your responses to these and to the questionnaires which will follow after your participation in the program as well.

Completed questionnaires in their sealed envelopes may also be brought to the Engaged Encounter week-end if the opportunity to return them before that date has not occurred. The Edmonton coordinators will be available to receive any questionnaires that have been brought on Friday, March 23rd, 1984, at the start of the week-end for which you are registered.

Again, I assure you that your responses will be kept completely confidential. If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this project, or difficulties related to the completion of the questionnaires, please call me, Linda Keep at 922-5477.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Linda J. Keep
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Alberta

6-102 EDUCATION NORTH, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA • T6G 2G5 • TELEPHONE (403) 432-5245

APPENDIX F

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

March 5, 1984

Dear

As notified earlier, we are again requesting your valued responses and comments regarding the Engaged Encounter preparation for marriage course, Edmonton. Having recently participated in this premarriage program, we cannot stress enough how vital your responses are to the success of this study.

We sincerely encourage your continued cooperation, and appreciate both the time and effort required on your part to complete the enclosed questionnaires. Again, we assure you that all responses will be kept completely confidential.

Two questionnaires are enclosed, one for each of you. As before, I ask you both to please take the time during the next week to complete your separate forms and return them in the self-addressed, postpaid envelope that is provided. Your envelope is numbered so once your response is received, no further reminder notices will be sent.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any aspect of this project, or difficulties related to the completion of the questionnaires, please call me, Linda Keep at 922-5477, or the supervisor of the project, Dr. Bill Hague at 432-3743.

We sincerely thank you for your cooperation and participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Linda J. Keep
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Alberta

6-102 EDUCATION NORTH, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA • T6G 2G5 • TELEPHONE (403) 432-5245

APPENDIX G

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

April 12, 1984

Dear

We are encouraged by the response to the questionnaires mailed to couples who have been involved in the preparation for marriage course offered by Engaged Encounter, Edmonton. A great deal of information about the results of the program has been gathered, and many excellent suggestions for improvements have been made.

We believe that your contribution to the study is also of unique importance and we are concerned that we have not yet received your response.

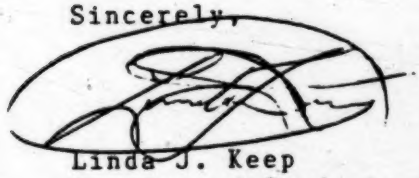
The purpose of this letter is to give you a final opportunity to share your viewpoint with us. If you have not already done so, we urge you to please take the time soon to fill out your separate forms and return them in the self-addressed, postpaid envelope that was provided. We look forward to receiving your responses no later than April 20, 1984.

If you have any concerns about this project, or difficulties related to the completion of the questionnaires, please call me, Linda Keep at 922-5477.

We hope to hear from you before our April 20th deadline.

With sincere thanks for your cooperation and participation in this study,

Sincerely,



Linda J. Keep
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
University of Alberta

6-102 EDUCATION NORTH, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA • T6G 2G5 • TELEPHONE (403) 432-5245

APPENDIX H

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

A wedding is a day . . .
A marriage is a lifetime . . .

February 19,1984

Dear Engaged Encounter Couples,

Catholic Engaged Encounter in the Edmonton Archdiocese supports the enclosed research project. It is through projects like this, that valuable insights regarding our strengths and limitations can be obtained.

It is important that we constantly review our weekend experience in order to provide the best in our ministry to the engaged. We understand the personal nature of these questions, and we assure you that all information will be kept confidential. Your input is very important, and can only serve to help other engaged couples in the future.

Therefore, we encourage you to support this worthwhile research project.

Sincerely,

Rob + Carol Taylor

Rob and Carol Taylor
Edmonton Co-ordinators
Catholic Engaged Encounter

APPENDIX I

PREMARITAL QUESTIONNAIRE

FORM I

>>>

19. Current living arrangement
__live alone
__with parents
__with partner
__with others _ 35

20. (a) Where did you live most of your life
(b) Where do you currently live

(a)	(b)		
__	__	Farm	
__	__	Rural but not farm	__ 37
__	__	Town, 2500 or less	
__	__	Town, 2500 to 25,000	__ 39
__	__	Small city, 25,000 to 100,000	
__	__	Large city, over 100,000	

Complete the following by circling the appropriate response. This is NOT a test. Answer as honestly as you can.

At this point in time my partner and I have discussed the following issues:

	Never	Somewhat	Partially	Thoroughly	Very Thoroughly (leading to resolution)	
1. Finances						
Feelings toward charity	1	2	3	4	5	12
The use of credit	1	2	3	4	5	
Whether one or both partners will work after the marriage	1	2	3	4	5	
Whether one or both partners will work after children are born	1	2	3	4	5	15
Whether one partner will be the primary breadwinner	1	2	3	4	5	
Whether it is permissible for either spouse to further his/her education after marriage	1	2	3	4	5	
Whose responsibility the finances will be	1	2	3	4	5	18
Who will buy clothing	1	2	3	4	5	
Who will buy the groceries	1	2	3	4	5	
Whether a joint bank account will be opened	1	2	3	4	5	21
Which proportion of money will be shared, and which will be for personal use only	1	2	3	4	5	
The financial stability of the man	1	2	3	4	5	
The woman's financial stability	1	2	3	4	5	24
How "extra" money will be spent	1	2	3	4	5	
Expected standard of living	1	2	3	4	5	26

	Total Disagreement						Total Agreement	
Our present level of agreement on these issues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	27

At this point in time my partner and I have discussed the following issues:

	Never	Somewhat	Partially	Thoroughly	Very Thoroughly (leading to resolution)	
2. Children						
Whether children are desired or not	1	2	3	4	5	28
When the first child should be conceived	1	2	3	4	5	
Time between conception	1	2	3	4	5	
Time for the children	1	2	3	4	5	31
Who will discipline the children	1	2	3	4	5	
Method of discipline	1	2	3	4	5	
Ways of parenting	1	2	3	4	5	
Values and goals to teach the children	1	2	3	4	5	35
Type of school the children should attend	1	2	3	4	5	
Will the children be baptized	1	2	3	4	5	
Under which denomination the children will be raised	1	2	3	4	5	38
Responsibilities of a father in raising children	1	2	3	4	5	
Responsibilities of a mother in raising children	1	2	3	4	5	
How our marriage will change as a result of having children	1	2	3	4	5	41

Our present degree of agreement on these issues is	Total Disagreement 1	2	3	4	5	6	Total Agreement 7	(42)

At this point in time my partner and I have discussed the following issues:	Never 1	Somewhat 2	Partially 3	Thoroughly 4	Very Thoroughly (leading to resolution) 5	
3. Roles						
Who will cook the evening meal	1	2	3	4	5	44
Who will cook the evening meal if both partners work	1	2	3	4	5	
Who will prepare lunches	1	2	3	4	5	
Who will do the dishes	1	2	3	4	5	47
Who will do the laundry	1	2	3	4	5	
Who will do the sewing	1	2	3	4	5	
Who will change diapers	1	2	3	4	5	
Who will scrub floors	1	2	3	4	5	51
Who will scrub toilets	1	2	3	4	5	
Who will wash windows	1	2	3	4	5	
Who will vacuum	1	2	3	4	5	
Who will take out the garbage	1	2	3	4	5	55
Who will make the bed in the morning	1	2	3	4	5	
Whose responsibility will it be to keep the house tidy	1	2	3	4	5	
Who will mow the lawn	1	2	3	4	5	58
Who will paint the house	1	2	3	4	5	
Who will repair the car	1	2	3	4	5	
My expectations of a "wife"	1	2	3	4	5	
My expectations of a "husband"	1	2	3	4	5	62
My partner's expectations of a "wife"	1	2	3	4	5	
My partner's expectations of a "husband"	1	2	3	4	5	
Responsibility to others outside the family	1	2	3	4	5	65

Our present level of agreement on these issues	Total Disagreement 1	2	3	4	5	6	Total Agreement 7	(66)

At this point in time my partner and I have discussed the following issues:	Never 1	Somewhat 2	Partially 3	Thoroughly 4	Very Thoroughly (leading to resolution) 5	
4. Religion						
The role God will play in our lives	1	2	3	4	5	69
Will we attend church on Sunday	1	2	3	4	5	
Religious denomination we will attend	1	2	3	4	5	
How involved I wish to be in the church	1	2	3	4	5	72
How involved my partner wishes to be in the church..	1	2	3	4	5	
Religious leader in the family, if any	1	2	3	4	5	74

Our present level of agreement on these issues	Total Disagreement 1	2	3	4	5	6	Total Agreement 7	75

5. Sexuality						
Method of contraception, if any	1	2	3	4	5	9
Whose responsibility contraception will be	1	2	3	4	5	
Acceptibility of certain kinds of sexual behavior...	1	2	3	4	5	
Sexual inhibitions, if any	1	2	3	4	5	
Frequency of sexual intercourse	1	2	3	4	5	13
Basic feelings about sex	1	2	3	4	5	
Feelings toward open displays of affection	1	2	3	4	5	
Ability to express sexual desire	1	2	3	4	5	16
Ability to decline sexual intercourse	1	2	3	4	5	
Feelings of sexual satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5	
Feelings of sexual dissatisfaction	1	2	3	4	5	
Who should take the initiative sexually	1	2	3	4	5	20
Similar sexual preferences	1	2	3	4	5	
Different sexual preferences	1	2	3	4	5	
Feelings toward infidelity	1	2	3	4	5	23
Possible reactions toward infidelity	1	2	3	4	5	
Openness of sexual relationship	1	2	3	4	5	25

Our present level of agreement on these issues	Total Disagreement 1	2	3	4	5	6	Total Agreement 7	26

At this point in time my partner and I have discussed the following issues:

Never (1) · Somewhat (2) · Partially (3) · Thoroughly (4) · Very Thoroughly (leading to resolution) (5)

6. Future Goals		
Our long-range goals	1 2 3 4 5	29
Our short-range goals	1 2 3 4 5	
Our dreams	1 2 3 4 5	
Thoughts, plans, and fears about old age and retirement	1 2 3 4 5	32
Type of life style we hope to share	1 2 3 4 5	
Who should carry life insurance	1 2 3 4 5	
What should be included in the drawing up of a will	1 2 3 4 5	35
7. Leisure		
What our "time priorities" are (ie. family, work, pleasure, education, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5	37
Amount of time to be spent together	1 2 3 4 5	
Amount of time to be spent apart	1 2 3 4 5	
If children, amount of "family time"	1 2 3 4 5	40
Time together with mutual friends	1 2 3 4 5	
Time apart with separate friends	1 2 3 4 5	
How vacations will be spent	1 2 3 4 5	
How weekends will be spent	1 2 3 4 5	44
How daily leisure time will be spent	1 2 3 4 5	
Things which we enjoy doing together	1 2 3 4 5	
Things which I enjoy doing by myself	1 2 3 4 5	47
Times when I feel excluded from my partner's activities	1 2 3 4 5	
Feelings about extended visits of friends	1 2 3 4 5	49
8. In-Laws		
Should in-laws be allowed to help with decisions	1 2 3 4 5	51
Should elderly parents be cared for within the home	1 2 3 4 5	
Frequency of involvement with in-laws (ie, visits, phone calls, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5	
Extended visits of relatives	1 2 3 4 5	54

At this point in time my partner and I have discussed the following issues:

Never (1) · Somewhat (2) · Partially (3) · Thoroughly (4) · Very Thoroughly (leading to resolution) (5)

9. Decision Making		
Who will make the family decisions	1 2 3 4 5	56
How will decisions be decided upon	1 2 3 4 5	
Will the opinion of one overrule	1 2 3 4 5	
How we will settle disagreements	1 2 3 4 5	59
10. Conflict Resolution		
How conflict will be handled	1 2 3 4 5	61
What our possible areas of conflict are	1 2 3 4 5	
Things my partner does which annoy me	1 2 3 4 5	
Things I do which annoy my partner	1 2 3 4 5	64
Discussing our feelings after a quarrel	1 2 3 4 5	
Discussing our thoughts after a quarrel	1 2 3 4 5	
Our degree of satisfaction in resolving quarrels	1 2 3 4 5	67
Our ability to admit being wrong when at fault	1 2 3 4 5	
Ability to ask forgiveness when we've hurt one another	1 2 3 4 5	69
11. Commitment		
Feelings toward divorce	1 2 3 4 5	71
Feelings toward permanency in marriage	1 2 3 4 5	
How I will continually work at enhancing our relationship	1 2 3 4 5	73
12. Communication		
Shared expectations of marriage	1 2 3 4 5	9
Expectations of our respective roles in marriage	1 2 3 4 5	
Personal weaknesses we are bringing into our marriage	1 2 3 4 5	11
Personal strengths we are bringing into our marriage	1 2 3 4 5	
Ways in which we are different	1 2 3 4 5	
Ways in which we are similar	1 2 3 4 5	
What I admire most in myself	1 2 3 4 5	15
What I admire most in my partner	1 2 3 4 5	
Things I would like to see changed in me	1 2 3 4 5	
Things I would like to see changed in my partner	1 2 3 4 5	18
Feelings toward the withholding of information from one another	1 2 3 4 5	
The keeping of family secrets	1 2 3 4 5	
Feelings toward the degree of communication needed in our relationship	1 2 3 4 5	21

Our present levels of agreement on the following issues are:

	Total Disagreement						Total Agreement	
Future Goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	23
Leisure Time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
In-Laws	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Decision Making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	26
Conflict Resolution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Commitment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Communication in marriage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	29

If no agreement was reached in certain areas (including finances, children, roles, religion and sexuality) what have you decided to do about it?

Agree to disagree _____ 31
Reconsider marriage _____ 32
Worry about it later _____ 33
Work it out before marriage _____ 34
Work it out after marriage _____ 35
Other _____ 36
(please explain):

At this point in time my partner and I have discussed the following issues:

	Never	Somewhat	Partially	Thoroughly	Very Thoroughly (leading to resolution)	
13. Background Factors						
How our upbringing will influence our marital behavior	1	2	3	4	5	38
Marital behavior of my parents I want to repeat	1	2	3	4	5	
Marital behavior of my parents I want to avoid	1	2	3	4	5	40
14. Personality Variables Our differences or similarities regarding:						
a. sense of humor	1	2	3	4	5	42
b. sociability	1	2	3	4	5	
c. introversion	1	2	3	4	5	
d. extroversion	1	2	3	4	5	45
e. emotional sensitivity	1	2	3	4	5	
f. self-esteem	1	2	3	4	5	
g. punctuality	1	2	3	4	5	48
h. temperature to keep the house	1	2	3	4	5	
i. satisfaction with appearance	1	2	3	4	5	50

For the following questions please use the back of the page if there is not enough space for your response:

15. My present attitude toward participation in the preparation for marriage course offered by Engaged Encounter is:

16. My present expectations of the premarital program are:

17. What I personally expect to gain as a direct result of the premarital program is:

18. What are your most important reasons for seeking marriage at this time in your life?

Most important:

Next:

Next:

Others:

19. Please list the following topics in the order of importance for you AT THIS TIME. (Place a 1 beside the topic of most importance, a 2 beside the second most important...ending with 15 for the least important topic.):

_____	Finances	_____
_____	Children	_____
_____	Roles	_____
_____	Occupation(s)	_____
_____	Religion	_____
_____	Sexuality	_____
_____	Future Goals	_____
_____	Leisure	_____
_____	In-Laws	_____
_____	Decision Making	_____
_____	Conflict Resolution	_____
_____	Commitment	_____
_____	Communication	_____
_____	Background Factors	_____
_____	Personality Variables	_____

20. Now, please indicate which topics you think are the most important for your partner AT THIS TIME by placing the appropriate numbers to the right of each topic above.

21. Which of the above topics would you presently like to see more agreement on?

22. AT THIS TIME please indicate how satisfied you are with the quality of communication with your partner on each topic by circling the appropriate number on the scale below.

	Extremely Dissatisfied						Completely Satisfied
Finances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Roles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Occupation(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Religion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sexuality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Future Goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Leisure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In-Laws	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Decision Making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conflict Resolution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Commitment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Background Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Personality Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

THANK YOU

Best wishes in your marriage!

APPENDIX J

PREMARITAL QUESTIONNAIRE

FORM II

>>>

Our present degree of agreement on these issues ..... Total Disagreement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Total Agreement (42)

At this point in time my partner and I have discussed the following issues:

Never 1 | Somewhat 2 | Partially 3 | Thoroughly 4 | Very Thoroughly (leading to resolution) 5

3. Roles

Who will cook the evening meal	1 2 3 4 5	44
Who will cook the evening meal if both partners work	1 2 3 4 5	
Who will prepare lunches	1 2 3 4 5	
Who will do the dishes	1 2 3 4 5	47
Who will do the laundry	1 2 3 4 5	
Who will do the sewing	1 2 3 4 5	
Who will change diapers	1 2 3 4 5	
Who will scrub floors	1 2 3 4 5	51
Who will scrub toilets	1 2 3 4 5	
Who will wash windows	1 2 3 4 5	
Who will vacuum	1 2 3 4 5	
Who will take out the garbage	1 2 3 4 5	55
Who will make the bed in the morning	1 2 3 4 5	
Whose responsibility will it be to keep the house tidy	1 2 3 4 5	
Who will mow the lawn	1 2 3 4 5	58
Who will paint the house	1 2 3 4 5	
Who will repair the car	1 2 3 4 5	
My expectations of a "wife"	1 2 3 4 5	
My expectations of a "husband"	1 2 3 4 5	62
My partner's expectations of a "wife"	1 2 3 4 5	
My partner's expectations of a "husband"	1 2 3 4 5	
Responsibility to others outside the family	1 2 3 4 5	65

Our present level of agreement on these issues ..... Total Disagreement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Total Agreement (66)

At this point in time my partner and I have discussed the following issues:

Never 1 | Somewhat 2 | Partially 3 | Thoroughly 4 | Very Thoroughly (leading to resolution) 5

4. Religion

The role God will play in our lives	1 2 3 4 5	69
Will we attend church on Sunday	1 2 3 4 5	
Religious denomination we will attend	1 2 3 4 5	
How involved I wish to be in the church	1 2 3 4 5	72
How involved my partner wishes to be in the church	1 2 3 4 5	
Religious leader in the family, if any	1 2 3 4 5	74

Our present level of agreement on these issues ..... Total Disagreement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Total Agreement 75

5. Sexuality

Method of contraception, if any	1 2 3 4 5	9
Whose responsibility contraception will be	1 2 3 4 5	
Acceptibility of certain kinds of sexual behavior	1 2 3 4 5	
Sexual inhibitions, if any	1 2 3 4 5	
Frequency of sexual intercourse	1 2 3 4 5	13
Basic feelings about sex	1 2 3 4 5	
Feelings toward open displays of affection	1 2 3 4 5	
Ability to express sexual desire	1 2 3 4 5	16
Ability to decline sexual intercourse	1 2 3 4 5	
Feelings of sexual satisfaction	1 2 3 4 5	
Feelings of sexual dissatisfaction	1 2 3 4 5	
Who should take the initiative sexually	1 2 3 4 5	20
Similar sexual preferences	1 2 3 4 5	
Different sexual preferences	1 2 3 4 5	
Feelings toward infidelity	1 2 3 4 5	23
Possible reactions toward infidelity	1 2 3 4 5	
Openness of sexual relationship	1 2 3 4 5	25

Our present level of agreement on these issues ..... Total Disagreement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Total Agreement 26

At this point in time my partner and I have discussed the following issues:

	Never	Somewhat	Partially	Thoroughly	Very Thoroughly (leading to resolution)	
6. Future Goals						
Our long-range goals	1	2	3	4	5	29
Our short-range goals	1	2	3	4	5	
Our dreams	1	2	3	4	5	
Thoughts, plans, and fears about old age and retirement	1	2	3	4	5	32
Type of life style we hope to share	1	2	3	4	5	
Who should carry life insurance	1	2	3	4	5	
What should be included in the drawing up of a will	1	2	3	4	5	35
7. Leisure						
What our "time priorities" are (ie. family, work, pleasure, education, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	37
Amount of time to be spent together	1	2	3	4	5	
Amount of time to be spent apart	1	2	3	4	5	
If children, amount of "family time"	1	2	3	4	5	40
Time together with mutual friends	1	2	3	4	5	
Time apart with separate friends	1	2	3	4	5	
How vacations will be spent	1	2	3	4	5	
How weekends will be spent	1	2	3	4	5	44
How daily leisure time will be spent	1	2	3	4	5	
Things which we enjoy doing together	1	2	3	4	5	
Things which I enjoy doing by myself	1	2	3	4	5	47
Times when I feel excluded from my partner's activities	1	2	3	4	5	
Feelings about extended visits of friends	1	2	3	4	5	49
8. In-Laws						
Should in-laws be allowed to help with decisions	1	2	3	4	5	51
Should elderly parents be cared for within the home	1	2	3	4	5	
Frequency of involvement with in-laws (ie, visits, phone calls, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	
Extended visits of relatives	1	2	3	4	5	54

At this point in time my partner and I have discussed the following issues:

	Never	Somewhat	Partially	Thoroughly	Very Thoroughly (leading to resolution)	
9. Decision Making						
Who will make the family decisions	1	2	3	4	5	56
How will decisions be decided upon	1	2	3	4	5	
Will the opinion of one overrule	1	2	3	4	5	
How we will settle disagreements	1	2	3	4	5	59
10. Conflict Resolution						
How conflict will be handled	1	2	3	4	5	61
What our possible areas of conflict are	1	2	3	4	5	
Things my partner does which annoy me	1	2	3	4	5	
Things I do which annoy my partner	1	2	3	4	5	64
Discussing our feelings after a quarrel	1	2	3	4	5	
Discussing our thoughts after a quarrel	1	2	3	4	5	
Our degree of satisfaction in resolving quarrels	1	2	3	4	5	67
Our ability to admit being wrong when at fault	1	2	3	4	5	
Ability to ask forgiveness when we've hurt one another	1	2	3	4	5	69
11. Commitment						
Feelings toward divorce	1	2	3	4	5	71
Feelings toward permanency in marriage	1	2	3	4	5	
How I will continually work at enhancing our relationship	1	2	3	4	5	73
12. Communication						
Shared expectations of marriage	1	2	3	4	5	9
Expectations of our respective roles in marriage	1	2	3	4	5	
Personal weaknesses we are bringing into our marriage	1	2	3	4	5	11
Personal strengths we are bringing into our marriage	1	2	3	4	5	
Ways in which we are different	1	2	3	4	5	
Ways in which we are similar	1	2	3	4	5	
What I admire most in myself	1	2	3	4	5	15
What I admire most in my partner	1	2	3	4	5	
Things I would like to see changed in me	1	2	3	4	5	
Things I would like to see changed in my partner	1	2	3	4	5	18
Feelings toward the withholding of information from one another	1	2	3	4	5	
The keeping of family secrets	1	2	3	4	5	
Feelings toward the degree of communication needed in our relationship	1	2	3	4	5	21

Our present levels of agreement on the following issues are:

	Total Disagreement						Total Agreement	
Future Goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	23
Leisure Time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
In-Laws	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Decision Making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	26
Conflict Resolution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Commitment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Communication in marriage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	29

If no agreement was reached in certain areas (including finances, children, roles, religion and sexuality) what have you decided to do about it?

Agree to disagree _____ 31
Reconsider marriage _____ 32
Worry about it later _____ 33
Work it out before marriage _____ 34
Work it out after marriage _____ 35
Other _____ 36
(please explain):

At this point in time my partner and I have discussed the following issues:

	Never	Somewhat	Partially	Thoroughly	Very Thoroughly (leading t. resolution)	
13. Background Factors						
How our upbringing will influence our marital behavior	1	2	3	4	5	39
Marital behavior of my parents I want to repeat	1	2	3	4	5	
Marital behavior of my parents I want to avoid	1	2	3	4	5	40
14. Personality Variables Our differences or similarities regard.ng:						
a. sense of humor	1	2	3	4	5	42
b. sociability	1	2	3	4	5	
c. introversion	1	2	3	4	5	
d. extroversion	1	2	3	4	5	45
e. emotional sensitivity	1	2	3	4	5	
f. self-esteem	1	2	3	4	5	
g. punctuality	1	2	3	4	5	48
h. temperature to keep the house	1	2	3	4	5	
i. satisfaction with appearance	1	2	3	4	5	50

For the following questions please use the back of the page if there is not enough space for your response:

15. What is your present attitude toward having participated in the preparation for marriage course offered by Engaged Encounter?

16. What stands out most in your mind when you think about your involvement in Engaged Encounter?

17. What did you personally gain as a direct result of the program?

18. Would you recommend this program to any of your friends or relatives? Why?

19. Please list the following topics in the order of importance for you AT THIS TIME. (Place a 1 beside the topic of most importance, a 2 beside the second most important...ending with 15 for the least important topic.):

_____	Finances	_____
_____	Children	_____
_____	Roles	_____
_____	Occupation(s)	_____
_____	Religion	_____
_____	Sexuality	_____
_____	Future Goals	_____
_____	Leisure	_____
_____	In-Laws	_____
_____	Decision Making	_____
_____	Conflict Resolution	_____
_____	Commitment	_____
_____	Communication	_____
_____	Background Factors	_____
_____	Personality Variables	_____

20. Now, please indicate which topics you think are the most important for your partner AT THIS TIME by placing the appropriate numbers to the right of each topic above.

21. Which of the above topics would you presently like to see more agreement on?

22. AT THIS TIME please indicate how satisfied you are with the quality of communication with your partner on each topic by circling the appropriate number on the scale below.

	Extremely Dissatisfied						Completely Satisfied
Finances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Roles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Occupation(s)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Religion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sexuality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Future Goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Leisure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In-Laws	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Decision Making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Conflict Resolution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Commitment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Background Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Personality Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

23. To what extent do you think your communication with your partner in the following areas has been affected by your involvement in the premarital program?

	directly affected for the worse			not really affected			directly affected for the better	
Finances	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	62
Children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Role expectations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Religion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	65
Sex and Sexuality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Future Goals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Leisure concerns	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	68
In-Laws	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Decision Making	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Conflict Resolution	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	71
Commitment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Communication	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Background Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	74
Personality Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Perception of Self	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Perception of Partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	77
Expectations of marriage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Ability to state feelings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Ability to listen	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	80
To understand yourself as a couple	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
The concept of forgiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Openness with one another	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Unity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	84

24. Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding any aspect of the Engaged Encounter marriage preparation course?

25. Have your marriage plans changed in any way as a direct result of your participation in the premarital program? If so, how?

26. How was this change seen?(Positive, negative, etc.)

THANK YOU

Best wishes for your future!

APPENDIX K

Factorial Validity of Items on Subtests of PREPI

The following tables indicate the amount each item contributes to its overall subtest, or scale (ie. Finances). Since the data has been presented in mean scores, these figures will indicate which items contributed most and least to the overall score. If separate dimensions within each scale were found, these dimensions are also reported.

A Factor Analysis was performed on each scale. The weighting of each item on its particular scale was found by using an Unrotated Matrix. Clustering of separate dimensions within each scale was found by using a Rotated Factor Matrix.

Please refer to PREPI, Forms I and II, in APPENDIX I and J to match each weighted item with its corresponding statement.

FINANCES

Item 1	.36	Item 8	.71
Item 2	.42	Item 9	.71
Item 3	.58	Item 10	.72
Item 4	.58	Item 11	.71
Item 5	.63	Item 12	.78
Item 6	.44	Item 13	.81
Item 7	.65	Item 14	.58
		Item 15	.71

Five separate clusters on the scale of Finances were found.

1. Purchasing: Items 8, 9, 10, and 11
2. Stability: Items 12, 13, and 14
3. Work during marriage: 3, 4, and 5
4. Credit: Item 2
5. Education: Item 6

CHILDREN

Item 1	.45	Item 8	.82
Item 2	.41	Item 9	.87
Item 3	.65	Item 10	.74
Item 4	.73	Item 11	.70
Item 5	.82	Item 12	.83
Item 6	.87	Item 13	.86
Item 7	.84	Item 14	.52

Two clusters appeared within the scale of Children.

1. Choice: Item 1 and 2
2. Responsibilities: Items 6, 9, 11, 12, and 13

ROLES

Item 1	.76	Item 12	.78
Item 2	.72	Item 13	.77
Item 3	.58	Item 14	.82
Item 4	.75	Item 15	.72
Item 5	.69	Item 16	.68
Item 6	.66	Item 17	.72
Item 7	.77	Item 18	.65
Item 8	.84	Item 19	.60
Item 9	.81	Item 20	.57
Item 10	.87	Item 21	.62
Item 11	.86	Item 22	.60

Four dimensions on the scale of Roles were found.

1. Indoor work: Items 3, 5, and 6
2. Outdoor work: Items 12, 15, and 16
3. Expectations: Items 18, 19, 20, and 21
4. Cooking and dishes: Items 1, 2, and 4

RELIGION

Item 1	.80	Item 4	.89
Item 2	.83	Item 5	.87
Item 3	.72	Item 6	.57

SEXUALITY

Item 1	.66	Item 10	.69
Item 2	.69	Item 11	.74
Item 3	.80	Item 12	.77
Item 4	.81	Item 13	.81
Item 5	.70	Item 14	.79
Item 6	.72	Item 15	.66
Item 7	.62	Item 16	.64
Item 8	.66	Item 17	.74
Item 9	.60		

Four dimensions were found on the scale of Sexuality.

1. Sexual behavior: Items 3, 11, 12, 13, and 14
2. Ability to express feelings: Items 6, 7, 8, and 9
3. Infidelity: Items 15 and 16
4. Contraception: Items 1 and 2

FUTURE GOALS

Item 1	.84
Item 2	.79
Item 3	.84
Item 4	.62
Item 5	.78
Item 6	.42
Item 7	.66

On the scale of Future Goals two separate dimensions were evident.

1. Plans and goals: Items 1, 2, 3, and 5
2. Life insurance: Item 6

LEISURE

Item 1	.71	Item 8	.70
Item 2	.79	Item 9	.81
Item 3	.75	Item 10	.82
Item 4	.54	Item 11	.69
Item 5	.79	Item 12	.76
Item 6	.78	Item 13	.72
Item 7	.72		

Two dimensions were found on the Leisure scale.

1. Time priorities: Items 1, 2, and 4
2. Time to be spent together or apart: Items 5, 6, 11, and 12

IN-LAWS

Item 1	.71
Item 2	.63
Item 3	.83
Item 4	.78

DECISION MAKING

Item 1	.92
Item 2	.92
Item 3	.88
Item 4	.77

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Item 1	.70
Item 2	.77
Item 3	.74
Item 4	.76
Item 5	.87
Item 6	.87
Item 7	.85
Item 8	.81
Item 9	.78

Two dimensions emerged on this scale.

1. Annoyances: Items 3 and 4
2. Discussion of feelings: Items 5, 6, 7, and 8

COMMITMENT

Item 1	.83
Item 2	.89
Item 3	.91

COMMUNICATION

Item 1	.83
Item 2	.84
Item 3	.85
Item 4	.80
Item 5	.63
Item 6	.75
Item 7	.71
Item 8	.74
Item 9	.73
Item 10	.60
Item 11	.65
Item 12	.67
Item 13	.66

Three dimensions emerged on the scale of Communication.

1. Expectations: Items 1 and 2
2. Perceptions of self and partner: Items 7, 9, and 10
3. Similarities and differences: Items 5 and 6

BACKGROUND FACTORS

Item 1	.92
Item 2	.85
Item 3	.91

PERSONALITY VARIABLES

Item 1	.83
Item 2	.80
Item 3	.62
Item 4	.60
Item 5	.59
Item 6	.67
Item 7	.74
Item 8	.51
Item 9	.76

Three dimensions emerged from within the scale of Personality Variables.

1. Amicability: Items 1, 2, and 5
2. Introversion-Extroversion: Items 3 and 4
3. Personal habits: Items 7 and 8

TABLE 12

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Age

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Age Total	17 to 25	23	31.9
	23.1 to 25	22	30.6
	over 25	27	37.5
Age, People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	17 to 23	1	16.7
	23.1 to 25	2	33.3
	over 25	3	50.0
Age, People lost from Pre to Post	17 to 23	12	50.0
	23.1 to 15	7	29.2
	over 25	5	20.8

TABLE 13

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Instance of First Marriage

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
First Marr. Total	yes	69	95.8
	no	3	4.2
First Marr. People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	yes	6	100.0
	no	0.0	0.0
First Marr. People lost from Pre to Post	yes	24	100.0
	no	0.0	0.0

TABLE 14

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Presence of Children

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Children Total	yes	4	5.6
	no	68	94.4
Children People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	yes	0.0	0.0
	no	6	100.0
Children People lost from Pre to Post	yes	3	12.5
	no	21	87.5

TABLE 15

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Length of Time Known

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Mos. Known Total	6 to 12	16	22.5
	13 to 24	19	26.8
	over 24	36	50.7
People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	6 to 12	0.0	0.0
	13 to 24	0.0	0.0
	over 24	6	100.0
People lost from Pre to Post	6 to 12	8	34.8
	13 to 24	6	26.1
	over 24	9	39.1

TABLE 16

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Length of Time Engaged

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Mos Engaged Total	1 to 3	29	40.3
	4 to 6	14	19.5
	7 to 12	19	26.4
	13 to 20	10	14.0
Mos Engaged People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	1 to 3	2	33.3
	4 to 6	2	33.3
	7 to 12	0.0	0.0
	13 to 20	2	33.3
Mos Engaged People lost from Pre to Post	1 to 3	8	33.3
	4 to 6	6	25.0
	7 to 12	6	25.0
	13 to 20	4	16.7

TABLE 17

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Length of Time Until Married

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Mos Till Marr Total	1 to 4	35	48.6
	5 to 8	35	48.6
	not set	2	2.8
Mos Till Marr People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	1 to 4	2	50.0
	5 to 8	2	50.0
	not set	0.0	0.0
Mos Till Marr People lost from Pre to Post	1 to 4	12	50.0
	5 to 8	12	50.0
	not set	0.0	0.0

TABLE 18

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Occupational Level

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Occup Total	Professional	1	1.4
	Semi-prof	10	14.3
	Skilled	7	10.0
	Semi-skilled	29	41.4
	Unskilled	14	20.0
	Student (U of A)	8	11.4
	Unemployed	1	1.4
Occup People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	Semi-prof	3	60.0
	Semi-skilled	2	40.0
Occup People lost from Pre to Post	Skilled	3	13.0
	Semi-skilled	14	60.9
	Unskilled	3	13.0
	Student (U of A)	2	8.7
	Unemployed	1	4.3

TABLE 19

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Monthly Income

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Income Total	900 or less	9	15.2
	1000 to 1500	19	31.6
	1600 to 2000	12	20.2
	2100 to 3000	16	26.4
	over 3000	4	6.7
	(omit or nil)	(12)	
Income People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	900 or less	1	25.0
	1000 to 1500	1	25.0
	1600 to 2000	0.0	0.0
	2100 to 3000	1	25.0
	over 3000	1	25.0
Income People lost from Pre to Post	900 or less	1	4.5
	1000 to 1500	9	41.0
	1600 to 2000	4	18.2
	2100 to 3000	7	31.8
	over 3000	1	4.5

TABLE 20

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Level of Education

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Education Total	Univ degree	16	22.2
	Some univ	6	8.3
	Tech college	18	25.0
	High school	22	30.6
	Less than H.S.	10	13.9
Education People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	Univ degree	2	33.3
	Some univ	0.0	0.0
	Tech college	3	50.0
	High school	1	16.7
Education People lost from Pre to Post	Univ degree	2	8.3
	Some univ	1	4.2
	Tech college	8	33.3
	High school	10	41.7
	Less than H.S.	3	12.6

TABLE 21

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Religious Preference

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Religion Total	Roman Catholic	52	72.2
	Anglican	1	1.4
	United	6	8.3
	Lutheran	3	4.2
	None	10	13.9
Religion People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	Roman Catholic	4	100.0
Religion People lost from Pre to Post	Roman Catholic	21	95.5
	United	1	4.5

TABLE 22

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Nationality

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Nationality Total	Caucasian	67	94.4
	Other	4	5.6
Nationality People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	Caucasian	6	100.0
	Other	0.0	0.0
Nationality People lost from Pre to Post	Caucasian	21	87.5
	Other	3	12.5

TABLE 23

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Parents Reaction to the Marriage

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Parents' Reaction Total	Very positive	48	66.7
	Positive	19	26.4
	Neutral	3	4.2
	Negative	2	2.8
Parents' Reaction People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	Very positive	5	83.3
	Positive	1	16.7
Parents' Reaction People lost from Pre to Post	Very positive	16	66.7
	Positive	7	29.2
	Neutral	1	4.2

TABLE 24

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Friends Reaction to the Marriage

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Friend's Reaction Total	Very positive	11	55.0
	Positive	9	45.0
Friends' Reaction People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	Very positive	1	50.0
	Positive	1	50.0
Friends' Reaction People lost from Pre to Post	Very positive	3	50.0
	Positive	3	50.0

TABLE 25

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Parents Marital Status

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Parents' Mar Stat Total	Marr/Liv Togeth	55	76.4
	Separated	2	2.8
	Divorced	4	5.6
	Single*	9	12.5
	Remarried*	2	2.8
Parents' Mar Stat People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	Marr/Liv Togeth	4	66.7
	Divorced	1	16.7
	Single*	1	16.7
Parents' Mar Stat People lost from Pre to Post	Marr/Liv Togeth	17	70.8
	Separated	1	4.2
	Divorced	2	8.3
	Single*	3	12.5
	Remarried*	1	4.2

* partner deceased

TABLE 26

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Current Living Arrangement

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Liv Arr Total	Alone	10	14.1
	With parents	28	39.4
	With partner	16	22.5
	With others	17	23.9
Liv Arr People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	Alone	1	16.7
	With parents	0.0	0.0
	With partner	2	33.3
	With others	3	50.0
Liv Arr People lost from Pre to Post	Alone	4	16.4
	With parents	12	50.0
	With partner	6	25.0
	With others	2	8.3

TABLE 27

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Where Subjects Lived Most

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Liv Most Total	Farm	13	18.3
	Rural, not farm	4	5.6
	Town, 2500 or less	8	11.3
	Town, 2500 to 25000	11	15.5
	Small city *	6	8.5
	Large city **	29	40.8
Liv Most People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	Town, 2500 to 25000	1	16.7
	Large city **	5	83.3
Liv Most People lost from Pre to Post	Farm	5	20.8
	Rural, not farm	2	8.3
	Town, 2500 or less	3	12.5
	Town, 2500 to 25000	5	20.8
	Small city *	3	12.5
	Large city **	6	25.0

* 25,000 to 100,000
** over 100,000

TABLE 28

Frequencies and Percentages of Demographic Data on Where Subjects Currently Live

Variable	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Curr Liv Total	Farm	3	4.2
	Rural, not farm	4	5.6
	Town, 2500 or less	4	5.6
	Town, 2500 to 25000	5	6.9
	Small city *	4	5.6
	Large city **	52	72.2
Curr Liv People lost from Pre1 to Pre2	Large city **	6	10.0
Curr Liv People lost from Pre to Post	Farm	1	4.2
	Rural, not farm	4	16.7
	Town, 2500 or less	2	8.3
	Small city *	2	8.3
	Large city **	15	62.5

* 25,000 to 100,000
** over 100,000

TABLE 29

Frequency of Responses to Item 15 (Form I)—Present Attitude Toward EE Before Participation

	Frequency
Positive	
Very positive, looking forward to it very much. Such courses are a necessary component to prepare for a new and demanding change in our lives.	24
Positive, I think it's important to be informed of and discuss marital issues before marriage.	10
Positive, looking forward to a beautiful weekend together.	5
Positive, but not to an exceptional degree.	7
Interested, expect it to be beneficial.	3
Open-minded about it.	3
It can't hurt to see what will be offered and if it helps then all the better.	2
Should be a good learning experience.	1
If it will help us in our marriage, it will be worth our time and effort to attend.	1
I feel that the experience and exchange of ideas will present a more objective outlook at dealing with the many intricasies of marriage	1
Looking forward to it because it's a step ahead for my partner and me.	1
I believe it is needed because I have a problem in openning up and discussing what I feel. I feel this course will help me.	1

TABLE 29 Cont'd

	Frequency
I think it is a very good idea to attend this course. I am fully willing to change so that our marriage may turn out to be the best it can.	1
I feel that it is worthwhile and I will benefit from it.	1
Neutral/Have Reservations	
Hesitant, if group discussions are involved.	2
Neutral, not one way or the other. I have heard both good and bad things about it. I'm waiting right now to make up my own mind about the weekend.	1
I didn't want to go. I didn't feel I had time. I had more important things to do, but I was sure, or almost sure, we would learn more about each other and it would benefit us. It shouldn't be a waste of time.	1
I am more than willing to participate, but it is inconvenient.	1
I don't mind taking the course, but I feel I don't have a choice if I want to be married Catholic.	1
Hesitant, I don't really know what to expect.	1
Anxious, if discussions are one-to-with my partner.	1
I don't think it will make any difference in our lives.	1
I really don't care if I take the course or not.	1
Negative	
Low level attitude, definite feelings of disinterest. I do not like being forced to take this course.	1

TABLE 30

Frequency of Responses to Item 16 (Form I)
Prior Expectations of the EE Program

	Frequency
To come out understanding one another and our relationship a little better.	23
To discuss various aspects of our relationship not yet discussed, or things we may have overlooked, or not even considered in our discussions.	15
To help me understand some of the problems that may arise in marriage and how to overcome them.	12
Improve communication and openness in our relationship.	11
To learn what to expect in marriage.	8
Expect the course to bring us closer together, strengthen our relationship and help us grow in love and understanding.	7
I hope to gain some insight into how to achieve a successful marriage.	4
To have extensive discussions on all aspects of marriage.	5
To talk more in depth about things we may have already discussed.	4
I hope that in some way it can help us get off on the right foot when we become married.	3
To help us solve some of our conflicts as well as enrich us for the future.	2
To be able to use the advice offered toward making a marriage work.	1

TABLE 30 Cont'd

	Frequency
To talk about marriage and why we are getting married, and whether it is the right choice.	1
To help us prepare for marriage and confirm our reasons for wishing to marry.	1
To make a final decision on whether or not to marry my partner.	1
I expect it to be a learning experience.	1
I hope to gain alot from the marriage course (vague, nonspecific).	1
To help us make God more present in our marriage.	1
<u>Uncertain/Have Reservations</u>	
I don't really know what to expect, hopefully it will be worthwhile.	4
Unsure, I've heard mixed feedback from friends regarding the course.	1
I would hope that the premarital course will offer reinforcement of our abilities to deal with our new challenge by providing valuable information on all aspects of a life together, rather than an indoctrination of beliefs.	1
I don't expect to gain very much from this course.	1
I know I will gain more insight into my partner and marrige in general, but not that much.	1

TABLE 31

Frequency of Responses to Item 17 (Form I)—What I Personally Expect to Gain From the EE Program

	Frequency
To learn more about one another and our relationship.	18
Gain a stronger channel of communication and more openness with my partner.	16
To learn more about my partner.	10
Learn a more accurate perception of what marriage means and whether or not my expectations of marriage are realistic and mature.	9
Develop a greater understanding of our mutual expectations in marriage.	8
Achieve a greater understanding of self.	4
Grow in patience with my partner.	4
Increase our love and sharing.	4
I hope to gain some insight into how to achieve a successful marriage and a better relationship.	4
To be better prepared to meet the challenge of marriage.	3
To learn how prepared I am to deal with marriage.	2
Learn how to resolve and deal with differences.	2
To become more aware of similarities and differences and to attempt to resolve them.	2

TABLE 31 Cont'd

	Frequency
To resolve any possible areas of conflict.	2
To gain a stronger relationship.	2
To discover the "unknowns" involved in marriage.	2
Discuss and resolve many of the issues raised in the questionnaire which we have not had time to discuss previously.	2
Learn how we can benefit our relationship by asking God into our marriage.	2
Learn new insights into the role God will play in our marriage.	1
A greater understanding of the Catholic religion.	1
An opportunity to discuss issues that weigh heavily in the success of a marriage.	1
Learn insights into a marital relationship.	1
To gain reassurance that this is the right step.	1
To reinforce some of the convictions and feelings we already share.	1
To gain knowledge of situations and circumstances that I may not have thought of or been prepared for.	1
Gain peace and happiness within myself and our relationship.	1

TABLE 31 Cont'd

	Frequency
Learn and grow together and individually.	1
Spend time together with my partner.	1
I expect to gain a richer, fuller life together in all aspects of marriage.	1
I hope to gain alot from this program.	1
To be able to let my feelings coincide with my partner's at all times.	1
I don't expect to gain very much from this course.	1*

TABLE 32

Frequency of Responses to Item 18 (Form I)
Reasons for Seeking Marriage At this Time

	Frequency
To eventually conceive children; start a family.	40
I have found and want to spend the rest of my life with the person I love.	21
Affection/love.	20
Companionship.	19
I feel I'm ready to make the marriage commitment.	9
Security.	6
I have found someone whom I love and with whom I think I'm compatible.	6
So that we can be together as much as possible/ without any questions asked.	6
To have someone to share all of my life esperiences with.	6
To have someone to care for and to care for me.	5
To have someone to build and share my future with / grow old with.	10
I am no longer happy living without my partner. I want to share my life totally with him/her.	5
Financial reasons / security.	3
To gain some independence from my parents.	* 3
I have found an extremely wonderful partner.	2
To establish a home.	2

TABLE 32 Cont'd

	Frequency
To be able to share thoroughly the love that we share in every way and to continue to grow in that love.	2
I plan to do the best I can to make our life together happy and rewarding.	2
I am feeling a sense of continuing companionship and am disinterested in seeking other potential relationships.	1
I am wanting to start a "new life" in terms of a new life style (family, wife, financial, leisure, etc.).	1
Through sharing, love and marriage I believe that we will grow to become better individuals.	1
To love and give myself to my family in order to be fulfilled emotionally and spiritually.	1
To continually get to know each other.	1
To have the stability and satisfaction that a long-term commitment will bring.	1
To better our lives.	1
For happiness.	1
Because I have found honesty and respect.	1
To make everything legal.	1
To have the respect from someone who truly loves me.	* 1
To gain some independence from my parents.	* 3

TABLE 32 Cont'd

	Frequency
I start work up north next year and it may be too difficult to start a marriage then.	* 1
To have FUN!	* 1
My family, we have gone out for 5 years and they feel we are ready for marriage.	* 1

* Reasons which elicit concern.

TABLE 33

Frequency of Responses to Item 15 (Form II)
Attitude Toward Having Participated in EE

	Frequency
Positive	
The EE program was an enriching experience that was well worthwhile. The atmosphere was incomparable to anything else. I enjoyed it very much.	18
I think EE has helped us to speak more openly with each other. We have dealt with little problems that we may have ignored. I think we will be able to keep our lines of communication more open.	3
Glad I went. Tremendous!	3
I feel better prepared for marriage and more secure about getting married.	2
We confirmed our feelings about everything.	2
I feel it is very good and that it should be compulsory for all engaged couples.	2
It was a meaningful and informative weekend.	2
I feel it genuinely benefitted both of us, especially in helping us get a more accurate perception of one another and our future as husband and wife.	1
I feel that the EE course is very valuable and would benefit any couple.	1
My love and respect for my fiance has grown.	1
It was a very valuable experience and has given us some tools which will prove very useful during our marriage.	1

TABLE 33 Cont'd

	Frequency
Have Reservations	
I don't think EE is as valuable to couples who feel they have already completed an extensive descussion of issues (ie. known each other many years). The program would probably benefit couples who have been together less than 2 years.	3
Good, but tended to drag on near the end (repetitive).	1
After having lived together for the past 10 months I found we have come across, or resolved, about 95 percent of the items EE dealt with.	1
I feel like a true survivor. The time was long and a little too regimented. My room was freezing cold. The material from the course was quite good and many questions started me thinking. I feel I gained a little more insight into my fiance and certainly I'm thankful for that. Overall, I'm pleased with the course.	1
I appreciate the improvement in communication it gave me, but I strongly resent the emphasis placed on religion and its role in a marriage.	1
Negative	
Too much emphasis on religion.	1
I was bored and I wanted to go home. There were too many outside influences which made me uncomfortable there. It was too long (7 am to 12 am), and cost too much money.	1

TABLE 34

Frequency of Responses to Item 16 (Form II)
Most Memorable Element of EE

	Frequency
Positive	
Learning how to improve our communication, learning its importance in marriage, and because of it understanding one another more.	8
The fact that we had the time to devote so much to one another and to reveal to each other our feelings and attitudes toward our married life together without having to worry about interruptions.	5
Through this weekend we have grown closer and I have come to know and love my partner more than ever before.	4
The open, sincere and honest communication that occurred consistently throughout the weekend.	3
The enjoyment I got out of reading my partner's letters.	3
The thought that prople were willing to give up their time and share their experiences with us.	2
The openness and sincerity of the team.	2
Most of all, the themes, "couple love" and "the decision to love."	1
Love was so much in the air.	1
I felt even closer to my fiance and God.	1
The weekend was a refreshing change.	1
The togetherness we shared and the atmosphere.	1

TABLE 34 Cont'd

	Frequency
I appreciated the time my partner and I had to ourselves to discuss the issues raised.	1
It brought things out that we would never have thought about.	1
I could identify with the team couples' rough spots in their lives. It's nice to know we're not alone.	1
Negative	
The weekend was emotionally and physically exhausting.	3
I didn't like the cold room, the uncomfortable air about the place (people seemed to talk in whispers) or the long, formal repetitive hours.	1
Too much enphasis in certain areas (repetitive).	1
The long, marathon type hours and atmosphere.	1
The routine was the same from morning to night, no variety or change in their format which resulted in boredom.	1
I was not very impressed with the long days that we had. Saturday was an extremely long day and we found that we were quite irritable on Sunday	1

TABLE 35

Frequency of Tesponses to Item 17 (Form II)
What I Gained as a Result of EE

	Frequency
Positive	
I gained a more profound understanding of my partner as well as a more profound understanding of myself, and my feelings toward my fiance and the life we are going to share with one another.	10
I learned how to communicate during good times and bad, and I learned the importance of communication.	6
I became more open and honest in communicating and in the expression of emotion. I am now able to say what I feel.	6
I gained the ability to trust and open up completely with my partner.	2
I gained a better understanding of marriage and what it means.	2
Confirmation of mutual understanding and feelings.	2
I personally gained confidence in myself, which will in turn benefit our relationship.	2
I learned a method of communicating with my partner. We find it quite easy to just talk to each other, but if perchance we can't bring ourselves to talk to each other, we can always write to each other and dialogue.	1
Talking, even about the littlest problems, was very rewarding. I also learned that it is easier to forgive than I had thought.	1

TABLE 35 Cont'd

	Frequency
We had an opportunity to write about and discuss some sensitive personal issues which we hadn't fully addressed before the weekend. We were able to resolve some, and we let each other know about a few others which we had previously kept locked up.	1
Confirmation of how well I do communicate with my partner.	1
I gained a deeper relationship with my fiance.	1
I gained love and respect for myself.	1
I learned ways to work out problems, and to have faith.	1
I learned to never stop trying to make your marriage work. To always give 100 percent.	1
I learned new ideas on how to enrich our marriage.	1
I gained more than I could put into writing. It was an enjoyable weekend because of the time we had just to talk and share our feelings.	1
I gained the ability to realize how important the couple is in the marriage; that the couple and their love is the most important thing.	1
I gained a better plan for the future.	1
Confirmation that honesty and sincerity are needed in a relationship.	1
I was able to see the larger role religion can play in our lives.	1

TABLE 35 Cont'd

	Frequency
I felt enlightened in alot of areas.	1
Confirmation of love and commitment with my partner.	1
The EE team was terrific. Through their "sharing" I gained a more optimistic and well-rounded outlook on certain components in a relationship. Very inspirational!	1
A feeling that we have a better chance than the average couple of living the rest of our lives together *and* enjoying it.	1
Negative	
A scribbler full of notes, a diploma we didn't need, and the flu (we froze in the building).	1

TABLE 36

Frequency of Responses to Item 18 (Form II)
Would I Recommend the EE Program?

	Frequency
Yes (35)	
Reasons:	
It would benefit any couple. I would recommend this program to anyone.	6
It gives couples a chance to discuss very important issues, as a result they learn more about their partners and develop a greater understanding of one another.	5
Definitely. I feel that everyone comtemplating marriage will then know what they are getting into. It's a great eye opener. Problem causing subjects are brought up and dealt with.	3
This program helps you determine your readiness for marriage and enables a couple to fully understand each other.	3
I would highly recommend this weekend to anyone planning marriage. It was most helpful to our relationship.	2
Yes, because two people should know each other fully before marriage.	2
I feel that if there are problems in your relationship you should get them out in the open at this time.	2
The program touched on many areas to consider in marriage and perhaps if more couples could experience the weekend, they would find out if marriage is truly the answer for them.	2

TABLE 36 Cont'd

	Frequency
I already have. I hope they get as much out of the weekend as we did.	1
I feel it affords people the time to take a good look at one another and oneself without outside distractions.	1
Any preparation is good.	1
This program showed us that marriage takes alot of work from *both* partners. It is never a one way street.	1
Yes, because it causes a greater love between partners.	1
The program demands a degree of soul-searching which an engaged couple may not subject themselves to on their own.	1
To ensure they know more about the commitment they are about to make.	1
I already have recommended the course to both family and friends. Because of its organized format, the secluded environment, and relaxed atmosphere you and your partner can really communicate.	1
Yes, but... (5)	
I'd recommend it only to couples who had known each other a short time or are still young (under 21).	2
Not if they have already lived together, or had been seeing each other for some years.	1
I would recommend it, but not strongly.	1
I would recommend a marriage course, yes, but would prefer to see less emphasis on religion.	1

TABLE 36 Cont'd

	Frequency
No (2)	
Because it was like a 19th century discipline school (too regimented).	1
It's hard to recommend something that is mandatory. However, under its present structure I would not recommend it as an all-round marriage preparation course. Perhaps as a course to improve communication it has value.	1

TABLE 37

Frequency of Responses to Item 24 (Form II)
Comments or Suggestions Regarding EE

	Frequency
Positive / Please Continue	
It's very good and I don't think you should change it.	2
Everything was well covered. Well done.	2
Great!	1
It was a terrific course!	1
Continue with the good work.	1
I felt the candle lighting ceremony was a nice part of the weekend. I felt special during this time.	1
The team couples and the priest were most helpful. The physical setting was good and the atmosphere perfect: quiet and reflection provoking. I'm glad we attended.	1
It is a very worthwhile course and I am sincerely glad that we attended it.	1
It was long, but it was worth it.	1
It gave us a chance to concentrate on each other without any external disruptions.	1
It was very well presented along with being very personal.	1
I really liked the privacy given to us by not having to share our feelings with anyone else but each other. If this program would have been "group," I would not have participated as much.	1

TABLE 37 Cont'd

	Frequency
Negative / Please Change	
The meetings ran too late. The sessions and presentations were too numerous and too long. The time constraints were a little demanding. We could have used more sleep.	15
At times, the time allotted for response (writing and dialogue) was insufficient.	6
Please involve more variety in the program. Change the routine.	4
Well done overall, but would favor a more objective approach to religion in a relationship. The religious part could be less deep. Participants do not necessarily share the heavy religious involvements with the church and God in their homes and marriage. Less emphasis on religion please.	4
More free time and breaks would be nice.	3
Some areas tended to be repetitive. These should be condensed.	3
We would have liked more discussion on finances.	2
There should be some time spent in group discussion.	2
Would favor more interaction between team members and participants.	1
The candle ceremony and the sharing of private prayers, hugs and kisses, and betrothal pledges with strangers were *too* "mushy" and unnecessary. This should be kept between partners.	1
The over-emphasis on religion and prayer disturbed me even though I am the R.C. partner in our relationship.	1
I believe this program should be partially funded by the government.	1

TABLE 38

Frequency of Responses to Item 25 (Form II)
Have Your Marriage Plans Changed as a
Direct Result of EE?

	Frequency
No (38)	
Our plans haven't changed. We've just decided to talk more, listen more, and try to understand each other better.	1
Not really, except that we have realized how important communication is if we want whatever plans we make to run smoothly.	1
Our marriage plans haven't changed, but I think we feel much better about our wedding day and our life together.	1
If anything, better insight.	1
No, but I think we both stand firmer in our commitment to each other.	1

Note For the few individuals who qualified their answers (above), change was seen as positive. Yet no change in marriage plans were reported.